

ARK THE LEGEND

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ROK GAME FANTASY STORY

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ROK
FANTASY STORY

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Ark : The Legend volume 1

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Throwdown

In the centre of the galaxy that separated the federation and Rama. There was a diamond shaped constellation consisting of 12 planets that formed the border between the two forces. This was the Bellin constellation where the Rama were fighting with the federation over resources. The places where the fiercest battles were taking place was on the left and right of the Bellin constellation, on the planets called Hanan and Athamas. Hanan and Athamas were the richest in buried resources among the 12 planets and they were also important strategic locations for the war. Therefore both sides committed the most troops to these two planets and a fierce battle was contested.

–Hanan has been occupied by the Rama!

The news of the Rama's victory spread throughout the galaxy! Finally one of the planets had fallen into the Rama's hands. Thus all the attention was focused on Athamas. If the Rama captured Athamas then it was clear who would win. The federation would have nothing to stand on if they lost Athamas. Naturally the fierce battle moved from Hanan to Athamas.

Ku ku ku ku ku!

The roar of the artillery continued through the day and night! Athamas' endless forests were filled with flashes and flames. The roar of the artillery echoed in the dark forests. Then a red flash of light separated the darkness. There was an explosion and one guy fell out of the bushes.

".....You monster!"

The man wiped his lips wet with blood and raised his head. The middle aged man who painfully raised his sword was Baras. He was the leader of the 3rd guerrilla unit on Athamas and had achieved considerable military gain. He had confidence in a 1 on 1 battle. He

had believed that. At least until he encountered 'him' on Athamas.....

–I didn't think you would purposefully come at me.....

'He' walked out of the forest towards Baras. The man was wearing red armour. His lightsaber was soaked in the blood of countless soldiers so it had a reddish tint. Baras knew who he was. Any federation soldier would know about him. He was the champion that caused despair to numerous federation soldiers on Hanan, the Rama's strongest warrior. He was the subject of fear from the federation and awe from the Rama. A moan emerged from the mouth dyed with blood.

".....The Red Slaughterer."

–My nickname has become quite famous.

The Red Slaughterer said as he slashed a vine with the lightsaber and approached. He was walking at a relaxed pace towards the gasping Baras. There was no taunt more humiliating than this for a warrior.

"Dammit, take this!"

Baras tightened his grip on his sword and threw his body forward. But it was impossible for a desperately swung sword to cut the Red Slaughterer. Baras' sword weakly bounced off the lightsaber. Then Baras switched his sword to his left hand and pulled out a machine gun with his right hand.

"Die!"

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The machine gun poured out countless bullets. However Baras was the one who ended up screaming.

"Kuaaak! T-this....."

Baras grabbed his thigh and fell to the ground. Blood was flowing heavily from between his fingers. Just as Baras had pulled the trigger of the machine gun, the Red Slaughterer had blocked the bullets with his lightsaber handle and cut him on the thigh.

–The gun isn't as easy to handle as you think, Rookie.

“T-this bastard!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Baras clenched his teeth and fired the machine gun blindly. However the lightsaber was swung at a tremendous speed and deflected all the bullets. Even a bullet fired from a distance of 1 metre was blocked. The Red Slaughterer laughed and continued.

–And this weapon isn't that great.

“H-how did you block the bullets.....?”

–Are you a pioneer?

“Ah, no.”

-Then you won't have a chance to know.

A red flash crossed the space. In the next moment, Baras' neck was hit by the flash of light and blood came gushing out. It was the end of Baras, the leader of the 3rd guerrilla unit who built up a large number of war achievements over the past few months. But the Red Slaughterer showed no interest on his face. He wasn't even pleased at the fact that he knocked down an unit leader. He turned away from Baras' body and walked towards 20 Rama warriors.

-The remaining federation forces have been taken care of.

–Casualties on our side?

–Many people are injured but it isn't enough to cause a problem to the strategy.

They were the Rama warrior squad that answered directly to the Red Slaughterer. While the Red Slaughterer was taking care of Baras, his squad were annihilating the 3rd guerrilla unit. The Red Slaughterer's squad had chased the target through hundreds of kilometres of forest and wiped them out after 2 hours.

–The next target?

–There was a support request from area C-15.

-C-15? Isn't there a Gigantic in that area?

-That's right. Apparently there is an influential person controlling the federation's defense turret. After the Gigantic received considerable damage, the engineer unit were left stranded inside the Gigantic.

–Considerably influential person? The name?

The Red Slaughterer asked with an interested look.

–He is a soldier called Rapid.

–Rapid? Rapid.....

–Yes, that is the nickname of the leader. He is the one who persistently challenged you on Hanan.....

–I remember. That guy was also sent to Athamas?

His interest turned into disappointment.

–Hmm, he still hasn't come yet.

–.....You mean Ark?

–He is late. I deliberately sent him a challenge.

The Red Slaughterer's deputy Keiko asked with a confused expression.

–I don't understand the reason why Captain-nim is clinging to Ark. He might be a war hero but there are thousands with a similar status among all the battlefields the federation and Rama are fighting over. Captain-nim's fame is 10 times more than his. Captain-nim is sending a challenge to a person like that.....

-He is the real thing.

-Really?

–Yes, and I have to a debt to repay to Ark.

–A debt? Didn't Captain-nim say you haven't met him yet?

–It is a relationship from a previous existence.

Keiko couldn't understand even more after hearing his answer. But the Red Slaughterer didn't explain anymore.

–Anyway, I have to meet that person. He has the title of the federation's hero so he can't ignore my challenge forever. No, I won't let him ignore it. I'll call him here even if I need to create a message with the federation's corpses again. In order to do that, I need to annoy the federation members a little bit more.

–Just give us a command.

Keiko said was an expression overflowing with fighting spirit. Then an observer at the front exclaimed.

-Captain-nim, 10 flying objects have been detected at the 12 o'clock direction. Judging by the mass, it seems to be Gigantic interceptor missiles and will land in a minute!

–Our location seems to be exposed to the federation army.

–Chet, those federation brats.

The Red Slaughterer clicked his tongue and muttered. Baras seemed to have requested bombs from headquarters before confronting him. But the Red Slaughterer's expression didn't change.

–You think you can catch me with something like this?

The red squad had chased the guerrilla unit across hundreds of kilometres. The defeated guerrilla unit had consisted of hundreds of Athamas lizard men and soldiers. Yet the federation's attacks were turned away repeatedly and they became disorganized once the defense lines were broken. And they had no way to stop it. The federation soldiers on Athamas couldn't oppose the red squad. Therefore the federation's headquarters would bomb the red squad with missiles every time their location was discovered. However that long range bombing didn't have any success so far. Of course the missiles were powerfully but there was no meaning if they didn't hit.

–Do you think we would just sit down and take it?

–Do they think we only have skills in hand to hand combat?

–It is annoying to avoid the missiles so we have to teach them.

The Red Slaughterer said to the observer.

–Calculate the orbit of the warheads and link them to the squad's Nymphes. Everybody get ready to intercept!

The red squad members lifted their weapons with long barrels after hearing the Red Slaughterer's order. It was the anti-missile equipment that targeted any missiles that came within range of 2km, the Stinger!

–It has entered the interception area!

–Launch!

Tutung! Tutung! Tutung!

20 Stingers were fired at the same time. The projectiles designed to destroy missiles flew through the night sky. And it hit the warheads that were approaching within several hundred metres! No, right before it hit the 10 warheads split into pieces and spread metal powder in every direction.

–It is the wide area Chaff!

–It is the Chaff that disturbs communication!

-What? What are these guys.....?

The Red Slaughterer raised his head at the unexpected situation and muttered. Then several objects fell and mixed in with the Chaff. They were 10 soldiers falling several hundred metres!

–Federation soldiers! Air parachute! They weren't missiles! The soldiers were disguised as the missiles in order to drop them to this location!

The observer burst out with confusion.

–All electrical equipments are jammed because of the Chaff! We can't catch them using the automatic interception system!

–Sheesh! These federation soldiers are a little smarter! All members, switch the Stingers to manual intercept!

Keiko manipulated the Stinger and shouted.

Then the Red Slaughterer stepped forward and said.

–That's okay. It will be difficult to reach that distance with manual launch. And.....

The Red Slaughterer grinned as he saw the soldiers falling into the forest.

–The guest that received the invitation has come.

Roaaaaar!

The blue sky stretched out in front of them. The silver airship flew through the scattered clouds. The gold ornaments on the wings indicated that it was an airship only aristocrats could use. Inside the airship.

“Waaahhhhh! S-so fast!”

“Look at the background passing by quickly.”

Slayer and Leon exclaimed while staring out the window. It was natural. This was the airship of Marquis Martin who was the federation's military advisor. His personal plan was different from the passenger ships used to transport users. It was a first class luxury airship that could move 2,500 km/hr and was capable of photon movement. As well as.....

“Look here. A bar, bar! The airship has a bar. Champagne in a crystal glass! Omo, isn't this a massage chair inside a bathtub? This isn't an airship, it is a perfect hotel!”

The interior contained facilities that were worthy of a 5 star

hotel! The only reason there wasn't a riot in the cabin was because of Melina.

"Ugh! Damn world! Look at the difference between the rich and the poor even in a game! Money is a bully!"

"Aren't the nobles just like politicians? They've obviously kept stuff back for themselves!"

"Sheesh these nobles! The world is unfair! Damn capitalism!"

Slayer and Leon spoke with the bitterness of the common people. Ark could understand their feelings but they weren't the right words to say in front of the airship's owner who was a noble. Therefore Marquis Martin frowned and looked at Ark.

"What? Who are these noisy and rude humans?"

"They became my colleagues through various reasons. Please don't worry about them."

Ark scratched his head with embarrassment.

"Let's continue our earlier talk. Why were you looking for me at Mt. Fargo? What happened?"

"I need your help."

A NPC's request meant a quest! He had guessed that was the answer when taking the airship back. The NPCs would never visit a user for no reason. And quests were like shining lights to users. If they completed a quest then they could get bonus experience and compensation. And the NPC giving the quest was the galactic federation's aristocrat. But Ark wasn't feeling entirely glad.

He had a chance to win experience and money from the quest but that was only if it was a success. If it failed then it was only a waste of time. It depended on the level restriction and the degree of difficulty. Ark had experienced that with the <Charem's Infiltration> quest. Therefore he couldn't relax at the possibility of being picked.

'A quest from a senior NPC like this is no joke. If I think about how much work I would have to do.....'

The degree of difficulty would be tremendous. It was highly likely to be difficult after the <Charem's Infiltration> quest. However he couldn't refuse. Marquis Martin was an aristocrat of the federation. He was also Beltana's Hero so Ark needed to maintain his good impression with the NPCs. He didn't even need to hear the quest to know that it would be hard.

"Please tell me."

Ark answered with a stiff posture. Marquis Martin sighed and said.

"Did you hear the news that the Rama occupied Hanan?"

"This is the first I've heard of it."

"It happened several days ago. Therefore the federation is in a fairly difficult situation."

"But didn't Charem solve the problem of the war in the Bellin constellation? Didn't the Aschulat send their troops?"

"Good point."

Marquis Martin nodded.

"The reason the federation focused a lot of troops on several planets isn't because of the enormous resources but because of its strategic location. Hanan is the best location as the transit point for the Star Gate from multiple planets in the Bellin constellation."

That's why Hanan's loss was a painful blow to the federation. The federation's transit point on Hanan was destroyed making it harder for them to send troops and supplies between planets in the Bellin constellation. It didn't seem like much at first but this difference gradually showed as more time passed. However the federation still had hope.

"That is the 2nd primary star in the Bellin constellation, the planet called Athamas. Just like Hanan, Athamas is also an appropriate location as a transit point. This is the last remaining hope of the federation. If we are also deprived of Athamas after Hanan then there will be no more hope for the federation. In contrast, if we

occupy Athamas then we might have a springboard to counterattack.”

However that required moving troops from other planets. The federation didn't manage just one or two planets. They couldn't leave those planets in a defenseless state to win the war. While they were contemplating this.....

Marquis Martin managed to sign an agreement with the Aschulat for them to enter the war. He was the aristocrat that had secured additional forces for the federation! The Aschulat committed to sending reinforcements to Aschulat. That was part of the problem.

“The Aschulat have no Star Gates in the Bellin constellation. In order to move troops to Athamas, the Aschulat need to use a multidimensional portal to synchronize with the federation's Star Gate to access it. In other words, they need to get the frequency correct.”

.....He couldn't understand what Marquis Martin were saying. But there was no need for him to understand. That wasn't the point.

“However the plan was leaked to the Rama. The Rama constructed a powerful antenna 200 km away from the federation's headquarters that interfered with the synchronization to the Star Gate.”

Therefore the Aschulat reinforcements were stranded on their home planet. Of course the federation quickly tried to destroy the antenna. But they were unable to get past the Rama's defences..... that was Marquis Martin's explanation.

He felt uneasy at this point.

“Then the task you require of me.....”

“You have to go to Athamas.”

A sigh flowed out at the expected answer. He knew the difficulty would be high but he never imagined he would be sent to another battlefield. This wasn't the individual commission of Marquis Martin but a request from the galactic federation. Obviously the rewards couldn't be compared to general quests. But this was a

battlefield. Ark had experienced it on Beltana but there were many soldiers on the battlefield. The abilities of an individual were limited in such a place.

Different elements were required to win the war. Friendly and enemy soldiers, commanders, equipment, situation in the battlefield.....all of that would determine the outcome. And the circumstances were already against the federation. What would the addition of Ark do? Having the same circumstances as Beltana was like throwing a 6 with a dice three times in a row. The possibility was highly unlikely. Ark tried to insinuate that.

“In this situation wouldn’t it be better to invest more federation troops?”

“If we could then I wouldn’t need to come see you. Thanks to the frequency disturbing the federation’s Athamas Star Gate, it isn’t possible to move a large number of troops. We can create a portal to circumvent the Achulat’s synchronization but that is also limited in the size of the troops. Therefore instead of the maximum number of troops, we decided to commit the minimum number.”

“What does that mean?”

“I think you’re the right person.”

“Do you really think I can reverse a battle like this?”

“I don’t expect that much.....”

Marquis Martin glanced at Ark and quickly continued.

“In history there have been several cases where the tide of the battlefield changed due to a soldier. That is the existence of a hero. It is like you demonstrated on Beltana. And there is one Rama warrior on Athamas that is the proof of that now.”

“Huh? Rama warrior?”

“Not long ago the military situation on Athamas wasn’t that bad. Then it changed when he appeared. The Rama Hero killed numerous federation troops on Hanan and played a key role in the Rama

military's victory there. After the war on Hanan ended, he headed towards Athamas and the situation rapidly tilted in the Rama's favour. And this is why I said you're the right person."

"That's why you called me the right person? What does that mean?"

Ark tilted his head with confusion. A 3D image then emerged from Marquis Martin's Nymphé.

"This is a video the Rama sent us after occupying Hanan."

"Oh my god!"

Melina burst out. She had been exploring the airship but sensed the serious atmosphere and approached with curiosity.

"Even if they are the enemy, doing such a cruel thing....."

Corpses had filled the screen of Marquis Martin's Nymphé! The corpses were stacked together next to a pile of ruins. Melina couldn't bear to watch it anymore and turned around but Ark kept his eyes on the video. He had found the hidden message within the cruel image. The bodies formed a series of letters.

I'm sending a challenge to Ark. The Red Slaughterer.

"The Red Slaughterer!"

This wasn't the first time he heard this name. It was a name that entered his ear when he was on Beltana. He was the Rama Hero who destroyed a guerrilla army with just 20 elite troops. But Ark hadn't remembered the name because of the flashy background. The Red Slaughterer was a name he associated with someone else. It was the reason Ark started Galaxian.

The strongest AI Lucifer! Lucifer's nickname in New World was the Red Man. When Ark heard the name Red Slaughterer, he was instantly reminded of 'the Red Man.' However he didn't suspect it was Lucifer simply because of the word 'red.' Ark had forgotten about it at first. It was his amazing way of using the body! He had become proficient enough to receive the title of Rama's Hero despite the game service only starting for a few months. And then he sent a

message to Ark. Ark only knew of 1 person like this.

.....Lucifer!

'Is this guy really Lucifer?'

"You already know about the Red Slaughterer."

Marquis Martin said after seeing Ark's expression.

"He has a lot of interest in you. Despite the war starting again in the Bellin constellation, he only recently received the title of Rama's Hero. The Red Slaughterer and Ark. It is impossible not to be interested. That isn't the only reason."

"It isn't?"

Ark who was thinking about Lucifer flinched and raised his head. Marquis Martin overlooked Ark's reaction and continued.

"Isn't it obvious? The Rama has the momentum with them after Hanan. In such a situation, the Rama will be demoralized if their hero is defeated by you. That is the role of a hero."

"Ah, yes....indeed....."

Ark nodded with a dumb expression. It was easy to understand when thinking about it that way.

"This message arrived at the federation a few days ago. We didn't want to respond to the enemy's provocation but it is also risky ignoring it."

"But now the situation has changed?"

"That's right. Like I said, if we lose Athamas and Hanan then it will be hopeless for us. That's why the federation army is concentrating their attacks on the Rama base containing the antenna. If we want this strategy to succeed then we need someone to kill their key-man, the Red Slaughterer."

"You're talking about me."

"The Red Slaughterer is his nickname. If it is you then you should be

able to catch him. That is what I wish for. I don't want you to lead the army to victory like on Beltana. I also don't want you to defeat the Red Slaughterer. You just need to hold the Red Slaughterer who is the largest variable while the operation is in progress."

"Does that make sense? What bullshit are you saying?"

Then Milan jumped in with an affronted expression.

"Hyung-nim is Ark! Beltana's Hero! That Red Slaughterer bastard isn't a match against Hyung-nim! Isn't that right Hyung-nim? Hyung-nim, let's go right now! We'll show them!"

Milan had no doubt that Ark was invincible after defeating Valencia. But the Red Slaughterer had received the title of Hero after experiencing dozens of battlefields. Valencia couldn't be compared to a warrior like that. The odds couldn't be guaranteed. Especially if the federation soldiers had already been reduced. But what if he was really Lucifer?

'This might be an opportunity to come in contact with Lucifer.'

Lucifer had asked to compete with the users in Galaxian. Ark couldn't help but feel like the conditions were really disadvantageous to him. Ark still wanted to know what Lucifer's ultimate goal was. A person who didn't know the goal couldn't leave the starting point. Even if it was just a guess, wouldn't that be beneficial? Of course, figuring this out was more important to Ark than anything. Even if he achieved success in Galaxian, it would be meaningless if Lucifer reached the ultimate goal first. And Lucifer defeating him meant the nuclear power plants exploding!

'The fortune I invested into the Taek Mountain land would fall to 0. Dammit!'

'There are rumours that it is impossible to win against the Red Slaughterer in a 1 on 1 battle. But that isn't the important thing. If that guy is the real Lucifer.....maybe I can figure out what his ultimate goal is. No, I need to confirm that he is Lucifer first.'

He had no choice. Ark reached that conclusion and he instantly changed his mind.

“I understand what you’re saying. I’m also a citizen of the federation. I can’t refuse this matter. But I’ve already undergone compulsory military service so I will be competing as a civilian. In addition, not long ago I became the CEO of an agent called Dark Eden.”

“I know.”

“Then can I make a request of the federation if I accept this commission?”

“In other words, you want a reward.”

“That’s right.”

“Does that mean you’ve already thought of the reward?”

“As expected from Marquis-nim, you understand me.”

Like the Marquis said, Ark had already thought of the compensation. However, the reward of the individual you want to receive the arc as you can get. This was the reason why he emphasized that he was the CEO of Dark Eden. It was in order to get Ark’s desired reward. The reason was because he created the business in a hurry.

“I know you better now. I’d like to think you would make a fair bargain. And this is an official request from the galactic federation. Anyway, if it is reasonable then I will pay it out of my pocket.”

“Then.....”

Ark approached with a coy expression. Marquis Martin looked at him with surprised eyes.

“That is what you really want?”

“Can you help me?”

“It is a bit complicated because it is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Domestic Affairs.....okay. If you obtain the results that the federation wants then I will settle it somehow. Do we have a deal?”

“There is just one more thing.”

“What?”

“Please gather my colleagues.”

“Are you referring to the soldiers who followed you on Beltana?”

“Yes, Marquis-nim saw the videos of Beltana so you would know. I would be able to obtain the title of Beltana’s Hero thanks to their help. If my colleagues join me on Athamas’ battlefield then the odds of success will increase.”

“That isn’t a problem.”

Marquis Martin answered and quickly spoke to an adjutant in the rear. The adjutant nodded and replied.

“We came into contact with them a short while ago. All 10 people are waiting at the landing place.”

“That’s right.”

Marquis Martin laughed and looked at Ark. Ark felt a cold shiver at the laugh. Not only did he find Ark deep in the outlands, he also knew the exact location of the Royal Guards. This meant Marquis Martin had an information network beyond Ark’s imagination. Once again, he shouldn’t make an enemy of this NPC.

“So the bargain is concluded.”

An information window popped up after Marquis Martin’s words.

<Athamas’ Battlefield! (Agent Quest)>

You have received a special mission from Marquis Martin, an aristocrat of the galactic federation.

Currently the federal army on Athamas, the 2nd primary star of the Bellin constellation is having a hard time against the Rama. Furthermore, the Rama had built an antenna to jam the frequency of the federation’s Star Gate to prevent reinforcements from the Aschulat. Just like you’ve become Beltana’s Hero, the Rama also has a hero who played a role in many of their victories. If you successfully perform this mission then Marquis Martin will give you

appropriate compensation.

Difficulty: A+

“Wait a minute!”

“Ark-nim, did you just receive a federation quest?”

At that moment Slayer and Leon jumped in. They both ran forward with red faces. After seeing the difference between the rich and poor, they were desperate to get some revenge for the commoners and drank the alcohol like it was water.

“That quest, can’t we share it as well?”

“You two?”

“Yes, if this is a federation quest then wouldn’t the compensation be enormous? Furthermore, we might even be able to get a hero title like Ark-nim. It is a request. Please share it with us as well!”

“But.....”

Ark looked at Marquis Martin with an uncomfortable expression. Marquis Martin replied without thinking about it.

“What are you talking about? Of course you will go with Ark.”

“Ohh! You really are a noble of the federation! Did you recognize our skills with just a glance?”

Slayer and Leon said with elated looks. However Marquis Martin had other reasons for accepting both of them.

“This operation is in progress so it needs to be top secret. If the information gets out then advancing will be difficult. You’ve overheard this mission so you have no choice but to go with Ark.”

“What? Your words put me into a bad mood.”

“It doesn’t matter. We will be given huge compensation.”

“Compensation?”

Marquis Martin turned and smiled. His gaze was directed at the empty bottles Slayer was drinking.

“That is a bottle from Padron where they only produce 100 a year. Just one would cost 500 gold. That is the alcohol you guys drank. Did you think you wouldn’t need to pay for the 3 bottles you drank?”

“Eh? What are you saying? You mean the drinks aren’t free?”

“Do you think this is a commercial airship?”

Marquis Martin looked at them with ludicrous eyes.

“You have two choices. Go with Ark to Athamas. That commission will pay for the alcohol that you drank. Or you can be found guilty of theft and forcefully drafted to Athamas. The choice is up to you.”

They didn’t have a choice.

-You have received compensation in advance for the <Athamas’ Battlefield!> quest.

In the end, Leon and Slayer were forced to receive these drinks as compensation for the quest.

.....As expected, it wasn’t wise to turn a NPC like Marquis Martin into an enemy. Therefore Slayer and Leon were forced to enter the war without receiving a penny in return. With Milan and Melina, that was 5 people secured.

“Dammit! If only you didn’t drink the alcohol!”

“Shut up! You drank 2 of the 3 bottles!”

“Huk huk huk, liquor is my enemy!”

They had to listen to Slayer and Leon’s drunkenness for the rest of the flight. Finally the airship crossed the Outlands and arrived at Tatuine.

Syu syu syu syu syu.

“Hyung-nim!”

10 people came running as soon as the airship's doors opened. They were Mellin, Hegel and the rest of the Royal Guards. Their skins were extremely tanned and thin in the month and a half since they arrived back in Nephelim. In contrast to their slim bodies, their eyes were extremely sharp. It was the look that showed the result of the Silver Hand's hell training!

'It is more than I expected.'

This look was what Ark desired. He could confirm the results of the hell training with just one look.

"This mission is to take care of the Red Slaughterer?"

The Royal Guards were puzzled after Ark explained the mission. They had been prisoners on the battlefield so they had heard of the Red Slaughterer. However they weren't puzzled for a long time.

"It doesn't matter who the opponent is!"

"What is dying one more time?"

"When compared to what we experienced, death is....."

"Following you is better than being with the Silver Hand!"

The Royal Guards weren't scared anymore after their hellish training. They were 10 warriors who weren't afraid of death. He also had the 2 level 80 warriors bought with 3 bottles of booze as well as Melina and Milan. Including Ark, a party of 15 people was created. The party was then sent to the federation's armoury.

"This is a formal request from the galactic federation. If necessary then you can hire these weapons and armour to use during the mission. Please select it using the necessary discretion."

Marquis Martin said as he pointed to the variety of weapons and armour that filled the armoury. As expected, their treatment changed after receiving a formal request. When they were prisoners, they had to starve and die while now they could rent supplies worth 9,900 gold for free. However it didn't have special significance to Slayer, Leon or Melina. The armoury was stocked with all sorts of

equipment of different levels but they were basically items that were mass produced. The standard equipments were general class products. It was meaningless for users who had magic or higher class equipment. Ark was the same as well. He possessed the unique Heir's Sword and magic Fire Eagle. His armour also had a magic rating. While the defense might be slightly lower than the level 80 general items, there were special bonuses attached so he saw no reason to change them.

'But the supplies are free!'

-<Fire Bullet for Shotgun: Lv.2>×100, <Freezing Bullet for Shotgun: Lv.2>×100, <Grenade: Lv.2>×30.....

Ark swept the Lv. 2 expensive bullets and grenades into his bag. Meanwhile the Royal Guards replaced their equipment. The beggar like Royal Guards now looked like soldiers from the federation. Of course his bag was popping open! Ark had filled it tightly with free supplies.

Character Information Window			
Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	85
Species	Human	Occupation	Elim's Heir
Fame	5,820	Adventure	720
Mana	325		
Health	2,450 (+65)	Mental Power	1,300 (+315)
Strength	210 (+33)	Agility	295 (+36)
Stamina	375 (+13)	Wisdom	40 (+8)
Intelligence	190 (+63)	Luck	55 (+3)
* Title			
Cleaning Foreman (Agility + 3)			
Ignorant Destroyer (Wisdom -10, Strength +7, Stamina +7)			
Beltana's Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +3)			
Mediator (Wisdom, Intelligence +15)			
* Contribution: Galactic Federation 6,850, Aschulat 500			
* Affiliation: Dark Eden (CEO)			
*Body Coating: Survivor			
+ Environmental adaptation increases by 50% due to the Survivor coating.			

- + The Survivor coating reduces the drop rate of Satiety by 30%.
- + The Survivor coating will reduce fall damage by 50%.
- +The 'Clairvoyance' effect of the Survivor coating is applied.

-Equipment Information Window-

Weapon: <Heir's Sword (Strength +20, Agility +20, Attack Speed +10%)>, Fire Eagle P-40 (Push effect)>

Armour: <Hyde Helmet (Camouflage Function)>, <Bhurad's Energy Shield (Strength +3, Stamina +3)>, <Harkenion Armour (Agility +10, Close combat damage reduced by 10%)>, <Pioneer's Leather Pants (Environmental damage reduced by 15%)>, <Pioneer's Boots (Environmental damage reduced by 5%)>

Jewellery: <Sheraton's Dawn (Intelligence +45, Mana recovery rate +30%)>

Accessories: <Charenjok's Token: Lv 2>, <Cheksun's Toolbox>, <Recovery Ampoule>, <Battle Suit-Hyper Drone: Lv 1>

His character and equipment inspection was OK. Once they finished the preparations, the party took the elevator to an underground hangar.

"The portal to circumvent the Aschulat's synchronization won't last for long. Hurry! I will explain the situation to the commander."

Marquis Martin said in front of the turbulent blue light of the Star Gate. There was no reason to delay any longer.

'Red Slaughterer! Here I come!'

Ark plunged into the turbulent Star Gate without hesitation. Ark's body was broken down into small particles and sent towards Athamas. 14 lights followed him and crossed the vast universe.

"The Gigantic has appeared in C-13!"

“Squads 5 and 6 in that area have been wiped out!”

“Enemy tanks have been found in area B-19, the defense is requesting support troops!”

“Drop C-3 bombs in that area at my command. 3, 2, 1, launch!”

The control room of the federation army on Athamas. The number of soldiers mobilized on this battlefield was no joke. There were 10,000 combatants committed! They were facing dozens of tanks, Gigantics and the Rama warriors. Therefore the soldiers at headquarters looked like zombies due to a lack of sleep. The soldiers fighting looked even shabbier. However they had no time to take a break. The federation already had Hanan taken away so Athamas was their last resort. If Athamas was taken by the Rama then the remaining planets would disappear. Of course, this was a war so they were prepared for this.

But there was one person sitting with a relaxed posture in the command room. It was Ark. It had been 3 hours since he entered Tatuine's Star Gate and reached Athamas. Despite arriving in a hurry, Ark had just sat in a corner of headquarters. There were no soldiers who could complain about Ark's attitude. They knew that Ark and the 14 warriors gathered at headquarters were there to take the mission. That mission was.....

“Ark!”

Then a cry resounded through the command room. Ark opened his eyes.

“I finally got the position!”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, the Red Slaughterer. There he is!”

This was why Ark was sitting in the command room. Ark and his companions hadn't been sent to Athamas to help the soldiers. Ark was dispatched here to tie up the main axis of the Rama's offense, the Red Slaughterer! He had been preparing for this.

“The 3rd guerrilla unit leader Baras sent us a report that he is located 150 km from C-17. Based on the situation, he won’t be able to hold them there long. The time will be 5 minutes maximum.”

“Are you ready?”

“Of course. We’ve been ready since we arrived.”

“Then let’s go.”

Ark stood up and replied. The Royal Guards, Slayer, Leon, Melina and Leon also stood up. They rode the elevator to the roof of headquarters where gun turrets 20 metres in size were lined up. It was a turret for support but right now it wasn’t loaded with shells. A capsule that a person could enter was within.

“This will take you to your destination.”

Commander Hasullo pointed to the open capsule. Right now 90% of the planets in Bellin were unable to launch any aircrafts. The main reason was due to the weapon called Dark Star. Dark Star was an artificial satellite created to intercept any flying vehicles. The Rama and federation had scattered a number of Dark Stars among Bellin’s 12 planets so neither side could use aircrafts. In other words, aircrafts couldn’t be flown to the battlefield.

The turret was developed as an alternative! It scattered the electrons to produce a range of 500 km. The electromagnetic field produced by the scattered electrons meant it wouldn’t be intercepted by the Dark Star. And soldiers could fly 500 km away at the speed of a bullet while remaining intact inside the capsule. This was why Ark was waiting in headquarters!

“Ark!”

Hasullo grabbed Ark’s shoulder.

“You’ve heard the communication in the control room so I don’t need to explain how serious this situation is. Or how important this operation is. You will be launched at the same time that the soldiers participating in the operation will move. If you fail.....”

“We will do our best.”

“.....Please.”

Ark entered the capsule.

Kwajijijiji! Pepepeng!

The electrons scattered and sparks flew as the capsule was fired. It was literally the speed of a projectile! Even though they received the body coating, it still became dark for a moment as they felt the gravity. They felt the pain of that gravity as they crossed the sky for a while. Then a message flashed on the monitor inside the capsule.

-There is 1 km left until the target area.

‘Pretty soon.....’

Ark muttered with a nervous look. The message then changed to a warning.

-Shells flying in the direction of the capsule have been detected!
Your safety inside the capsule can't be guaranteed if hit by these shells.
Escape quickly!

‘.....Those guys!’

“Everybody escape from the capsule!”

Ark shouted as he pulled a handle inside the capsule. At that moment, the capsule dissolved into Chaff. At the same time, Ark's seat was separated from the capsule and started falling at a huge velocity. If he hit the ground then he would be smashed!

“Vehicle control! Jet!”

Hwaaaaack!

Flames appeared from the jets underneath his seat and his falling speed decreased. Ark landed safely thanks to the jet equipment and

released the seat belt before shouting.

“We’re not far from the enemy. Gather quickly!”

The surrounding bushes shook and the members gathered around Ark. There were 14 people including Ark.

“Okay. Fortunately we didn’t lose anyone. Now.....”

Then the bushes dozens of metres away shook and a bunch of people appeared. They were soldiers wearing red armour. It was obvious by the colour alone who they were. The Rama warriors wearing red armour on Athamas were soldiers that the federation never managed to defeat. They were the Rama’s elite squad! Their leader was.....

“The Red Slaughterer.”

Ark said in a low voice. The warrior in front wearing red armour turned around and slowly smiled.

–*We finally meet Ark!*

Hero VS Hero (Part: 1)

Approximately 100 metres from Ark and the Red Slaughterer's location in the forest. A mysterious man was watching them from the branches above. He was wearing dark armour and blended into the darkness.

"It is progressing like I thought."

The man spoke in a low voice with a smile on his face.

"I'm sorry but I'm going to take this victory."

The man quickly climbed down the tree like an agile cat. He carefully walked behind a bush and kicked the ground before nodding.

"Okay. I should finish this quickly."

The surprising thing that the man took out.....

The capsules exploded and scattered Chaff. The scattered powder looked like glittering lights covering the sky, giving the battlefield a fantastic atmosphere. However, the space below was tense and frozen. It was due to the soldiers divided into two sides! They were the Rama's strongest squad and Dark Eden who represented the galactic federation. In other words, it was Ark's troops versus the Red Slaughterer's troops. They had stumbled across each other on the battlefield. Normally bullets and swords should be running rampant. But the two sides 30 metres away from each other didn't move. It was because of the tension flowing between the Red Slaughterer and Ark. The Red Slaughterer scanned Ark with the infrared scope and opened his mouth first.

—Ark.....

He confirmed Ark's name with the infrared scope. But Ark couldn't confirm the name of the Red Slaughterer.

[-#\$\$%!##\$.]

The infrared scope displayed unknown characters. He was using special equipment to deliberately conceal his character name. That's why the federation army had no choice but to call him Red Slaughterer.

'There must be something if he bothered to hide his name on the battlefield.....'

"Are you the one called Red Slaughterer?"

–The federation soldiers call me that.

"I wanted to ask you. Why did you send a challenge to me?"

–I wanted to check.

"Check? What?"

–Whether you are the 'real' Ark.....

The Red Slaughterer's eyes narrowed as he looked at Ark.

–So far I have seen many opponents with the same name on the battlefield. But I could tell right away. They have the same name but they're not real. I want to meet only one Ark. Do you know who that is Answer me. Are you the real one?

"Why are you clinging to the name Ark?"

–I have a debt to repay.

"A debt to repay? Then you....really....."

Ark stared at the Red Slaughterer.

".....Lucifer?"

Then the eyes of the Red Slaughterer flashed.

I found him! Ark!

"Answer! Are you really Lucifer?"

-Check it with your skills!

The red light from the Red Slaughterer's beam sword rose up. Then there was the sound of someone firing the bullets at the Red Slaughterer from the bushes. The first one who reacted was Leon. The Red Slaughterer had been looking at Ark throughout the confrontation so Leon used the chance to fire his Rail Gun.

Tu tu tu tung-!

Blue rays crossed the darkness! The moment the projectile was about to hit the Red Slaughterer's head, the red lightsaber struck it down. The deflected bullet changed direction and lodged in a tree.

"W-what is he? Blocking a bullet with the sword....."

Leon stuttered at the incredible sight.

-Don't interfere! This fight is between Ark and me.

The Red Slaughterer roared angrily.

-Red squad! Take care of those guys!

-Understood. Everybody prepare for battle!

The Red squad simultaneously lifted their beam swords. As expected from the core squad of the Rama army, their basic equipment was the beam sword. But Ark's party had the support of the galactic federation. Although it wasn't at the standard of the beam swords but they had changed their equipment in Tatuine's armoury.

'The opponent is the Rama's strongest squad.'

The Red squad that caused countless despair to the federation army. Even if the Royal Guards went through the Silver Hand's training, it would still be difficult for them to win. In addition, the Red squad had 20 people while the addition of Leon, Melina and Milan meant Dark Eden only had 13 people. It was an overwhelming disadvantage! However they knew this before coming here. In this battle victory or defeat wasn't important. Marquis Martin and Commander Hasullo didn't even want Ark to destroy the Red squad.

They just wanted Ark and Dark Eden to hold the core power of the Rama army as long as possible. Ark had developed tactics focused on that part.

‘There is no reason to confront the Red squad!’

“Spread out!”

Tung, syu syu syu syu! Tung, syu syu syu syu!

At Ark’s command, the group dropped dozens of smoke bombs. The Royal Guard members, Milan, Melina and Leon scattered into the forest. The Red Slaughterer yelled with an annoyed expression.

–Chet, how petty. Keiko, I’ll leave those guys to you!

The dense smoke scattered at the bolt of blue light. Sparks flew as red and blue beams collided. Ark had emerged from the smoke.

“Your opponent is me!”

–Ark! Come!

A gleeful smile was on the Red Slaughterer’s face. At the same time, two beams of light clashed in the darkness.

“Pant pant pant! Pant pant pant!”

Hundreds of metres from the place where Ark and the Red Slaughterer clashed. 20 soldiers were crossing the forest while breathing harshly.

“Pant pant pant, hurry up! There is no time!”

“B-but.....”

“I know. We’ve been battling for several hours with no breaks and your fatigue is at the limit. But we’re the unit closest to the destination so we received the support order. Several Rama units are chasing us so if we don’t hurry then it will become difficult.”

Despite saying this, the heard of the blond man was rough and

unstable. However that wasn't due to running through the bushes. His heart was wavering because of a name! Ark! The man was deeply embedded in his head! The reason he started Galaxian was to meet Ark. He had deliberately committed a crime to join the prisoners to meet up with him.

.....It was useless. While the blond youth had been sent to Hanan, Ark had returned to Istana as Beltana's Hero. Since then the young man tried to escape from the prisoner status but another wall was in front of him. The Rama Hero, the Red Slaughterer! He was drafted to Hanan where the federation troops were smashed by the Red Slaughterer and the Rama. It was impossible for the prisoners to build up achievements in that situation. No, he tasted death too many times at the hands of the Red Slaughterer.

'But those deaths weren't in vain.'

He had been hurt a long time ago and it was difficult for him to even walk to the capsule. That was true even in the game. Therefore his progress in meeting Ark was delayed. The doctor said it was the limit of his physical strength. But his thoughts were different.

'Is it my fate to not meet Ark?'

He couldn't get past the situation. As a result he lost his motivation. However that changed when he met the Red Slaughterer. No, he realized something after hearing the Red Slaughterer's words. He recognized what a powerless existence was.

'Why am I trying to meet Ark? Is it to show him this body? To buy his sympathy? No! I can't explain properly why I want to meet him. But meeting in this state doesn't mean anything. Yes, the important thing isn't meeting him but how I meet him.'

The blond youth clenched his teeth. He made an effort to get stronger inside the game and out.

'It is impossible to overcome my physical obstacles at the moment. It will be difficult to catch up with other users with swordplay. Therefore I have to only focus on marksmanship from now on!'

A battlefield was a good training ground for him. He polished off his

marksmanship day and night during the war and developed incredible skills. It was the essence of marksmanship, quick fire shooting! He intensively trained in shooting with his right hand. Thanks to his skills, he received the nickname Rapid and became the leader of a unit despite being a prisoner. And he steadily built up his achievements until he could finally be pardoned. Yet he was told a shocking message by headquarters just now.

–This is transmitted to the whole army. Ark, the hero of Beltana has arrived at Athamas and is taking care of the Red squad in area C-17. Ark will soon take on the Red Slaughterer. Units 13, 15, 45 and 46 should move to the areas next to C-17 to support Ark. The remaining troops will retreat to the designated locations and wait for the next order. I repeat. This is an order. The federation army.....

There were more troops sent to Athamas than Hanan. There were many reasons why but the Red Slaughterer had a decisive influence. The morale of the Rama had soared after Hanan. And their hero was the Red Slaughterer. Thanks to the Red squad destroying the federation soldiers, their morale soared even more. Therefore headquarters had searched for an alternative.....

‘That is Ark!’

The blonde youth’s heart fluctuated wildly. Ark was also on this battlefield. Moreover, he was the leader of unit 46 that was ordered to support him!

‘I can meet him! There’s only a few hundred metres left and I can meet Ark!’

His emotions were repressed while he was fighting on Athamas but he couldn’t hold it back anymore now that he knew Ark was several hundred metres near him. His eyes were fixed on the forest 1 km away. It was the place where Ark and the Red Slaughterer were fighting!

“Captain-nim, it is dangerous!”

A soldier following behind the blond youth shouted. A small metal sphere was thrown the moment he broke through the bush.

“A land mine! Everybody get down!”

Pepepepeng, pepepepeng!

The red sensor on the sphere went off and it exploded. The blast pushed the blond youth back several metres before he got up. Meanwhile the soldier who received the explosion instead of the blond youth was covered in blood.

“Medic! It is an emergency!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The blond youth cried out just as a hail of bullets fired at him. The forest was saturated with Rama warriors.

“Damn, it’s an ambush! All members look for cover and be alert!”

The blond youth shouted as he hid behind a tree. Then leaves fell from above his head. When he flinched and looked up, a Rama warrior was falling towards him with a dagger.

–Die you federation dogs!

And the moment the dagger was about to hit his neck!

Tang-! Tang-! Tang-!

Three gunshots shook the forest. The Rama warrior went flying back from shots to his shoulders and forehead. This was why the blond youth was known as Rapid! He fired his gun at a speed that was difficult to see. Even if the distance was 100 metres, his hit rate was 100% accurate. The Rama warrior was turned into a honeycomb as the blond youth continuously fired.

‘I have no time to be caught in a place like this!’

“All troops, take cover!”

The blond youth threw a wooden pole and yelled. There was gunfire and the wooden fragments flew all over the place. However, the blond youth’s eyes moved like a machine and identified the location of the sparks in the darkness. It was the places where the Rama warriors were hiding!

‘There is one guy behind the tree at 3 o’clock! Another two on top!’

Tang-! Tang-! Tang-!

The cylinder of his automatic pistol moved and fired the bullets powerfully. The gunshots hit the enemy’s head without a doubt. Even if it was a long range weapon, a gun was different from the bows in medieval ages. It was a weapon that could kill the enemy by moving just one finger. This was the primary reason why the blond youth chose the gun as a weapon. There was a disadvantage of course. Most soldiers used shields, making the damage of the gun weaker than melee weapons. However, he had the ability to compensate for this. It was the hit rate that he trained night and day! The headshots occurred thanks to that.

‘I have only this!’

The blond youth experienced countless deaths on the battlefield and now he only aimed for headshots.

-Headshot-III!

<You have inflicted a serious blow and the enemy will receive additional 200% damage>

And he finally obtained Headshot-III! A normal headshot dealt 50% more damage. The blond youth didn’t have time to wait for support from his unit and continued taking out the enemies. Naturally the Rama weren’t just sitting there politely. They were wildly shooting machine guns, using shields or throwing grenades.

Tang! Tang! Pepepeng!

He could intercept the grenade with just a gun. However, one pistol couldn’t fend off all those attacks! The blond youth’s body became bloody thanks to the numerous Rama warriors. However.....

‘Ark is right in front of me! I can’t stop here!’

“Don’t disturb me! I’m going to kill everyone who tries to stop me!”

The blond youth roared like a wounded predator.

“Pant.....pant.....”

In the dark forest where there was a smoke screen. The man with a large body leaned against a tree gasping. Dozens of bullet wounds and cuts from swords could be seen on his grey skin. His name was Cupa. His large size indicated he was from the Tobil clan. But his injuries looked so serious that it was hard to expect him to recover. No, it was a miracle he was still breathing.

–What great tenacity.

A man approached him. Holding a machine gun in one hand and a lightsaber in the other, it was the Rama warrior Keiko. He was the leader of the Red squad.

–So far I've dealt with numerous federation soldiers but this is the first time I've encountered someone like you.

The Red Slaughterer was famous but he had also killed numerous federation soldiers. However he had never seen a federation soldier worth paying attention to. The federation soldiers were just targets to be killed. But this time was different.

‘Who is this guy?’

For the first time, Keiko was curious about an enemy. Cupa wasn't particularly stronger than the federation soldiers. He wasn't stronger than the other soldiers that had died from his hands. However he had something more.

.....About 10 minutes ago.

‘Those stupid guys just came here to die.’

Keiko thought as he entered the forest after Ark dropped a smokescreen. Athamas was a planet covered in dense forest. The Rama were a warlike species who inherited the DNA of their ancestors. They were a species who received bonus abilities in the mountains or forests and the Red squad were the elite of the Rama

warriors.

‘Stupid federation bastards. They used Chaff to block any communication to reinforcements yet they chose to confront us in a place like this.’

They could exterminate these guys in 10 minutes tops. Keiko never thought it would take longer than that. However that idea changed once they actually started fighting.

‘This guy.....he’s not the normal type!’

Ark’s troops were different from the normal federation soldiers. Their skills weren’t particularly better. If they were normal than Keiko would’ve defeated this guy in 10 minutes like planned. However Keiko had been unable to defeat Cupa over the last 10 minutes. The reason was simple.

‘This guy, this isn’t the first time he’s fought in a forest. He is just as familiar as the Rama about how to use a tree or bush to battle. This isn’t a level that can be achieved through training. These skills can only be learnt by overcoming crisis. But the scary thing is.....’

Tenacity! His body was riddled with bullets! He latched onto the enemy despite the sword shredding his skin! This was what aroused Keiko’s interest. Keiko stepped closer to the dying Cupa and asked.

–What? Why are you fighting so fiercely? Your loyalty to the galactic federation?

“The federation.....loyalty.....kukuku.....how funny.”

Cupa laughed with lips stained with blood.

“Federation.....it doesn’t matter if it falls or not.....it doesn’t matter.”

-Then what?

“You.....won’t understand.....”

Cupa looked up at Keiko and laughed. He recalled the last month and a half with the shadow of death hanging over him.

Once again, the Royal Guards had served in the Beltana war as prisoners. Of course their levels and skills were inferior to regular troops. The Royal Guards had grown thanks to their training with the Silver Hand. They had been sold to the Silver Hand to secure the agent registration fee. Every hour of the last month and a half was an adventure that pulled them close to death. They raised their stamina, gymnastic ability, reflexes and courage through their close encounters with death.....

Of course, this didn't mean that their levels rose. Nevertheless, there was a reason Ark chose to have them train with the Silver Hand. If it could be briefly described.....

Whenever a user gained a level, they received 10 bonus points that they could invest into any stat they wanted. But the NPCs didn't have the same freedom as a user. They gained 10 bonus points but the stat raised was random. Of course, if they were warriors then it was highly likely for strength or stamina to increase. If the warrior was unlucky then they would gain points in wisdom or luck. If they were really unlucky then a level 100 warrior would only have 200 points in strength while the rest were invested in X stats. That's why most NPCs had lower stats than users despite receiving the same bonus.

However, there was still a solution. NPCs couldn't choose what stat to invest in but there were ways to increase the probability of certain stats. The method was surprisingly simple. If NPCs trained in a certain ability then it would climb. Of course, that was more difficult than it seemed. A person had to train more than others in weight lifting or study harder than others if the NPC wanted to raise that particular stat. This was the core of the training program that Ark created.

The PT exercises that lasted several hours.....

<p>-Your muscle strength has increased due to the continuous training in physical strength.</p> <p><The probably that the level up bonus will be invested in strength has increased></p>
--

It increased the changes of strength increasing! Spending a few days suffering from a fever in a bee infested cave.....

-Your concentration has increased thanks to running around and escaping from the bees.

<The probably that the level up bonus will be invested in concentration has increased>

It increased concentration! Climbing up the cliff to receive a meal.....

-Your stamina has increased from climbing the cliffs daily.

<The probably that the level up bonus will be invested in stamina has increased>

Their stamina increased! There was a reason for it. The result of their hell training meant the chances of a combat related stat would drastically increase! They were able to verify that after hunting in a dungeon with the Silver Hand. The warriors Ralph and Berad increased their strength and stamina every time they levelled up. Hedro, Reben, Konsed, Kalliben and Beleol increased their agility! Meanwhile Hegel and Mellin raised their intelligence! General NPCs increased their related stats by 3~4 points. However, the trained Royal Guards increased their respective stats by 6~7 points. This meant they became stronger than other NPCs. At the end of their terrible hell training, a miraculous physical modification was created.

But that wasn't the real effect of the hell training. The physical modifications were an investment for the future. It would only exert its power once they reached a certain level. The Royal Guards had only gained 10 levels after their training with the Silver Hand so it didn't have a significant effect yet. There was another reason why the Red squad members were perplexed. The members who had experienced hell more terrible than death.....

“Kukuku.....I’m not afraid of death!”

Cupa who had become like a bloody rag laughed. A madness that didn’t fear death!

“You know.....the pain I went through compared to this.....death.....it is nothing. I fear only one thing.....going back to that hell.....to do that, we have to show Hyung-nim that we’ve become stronger. So.....even if my whole body is torn apart and I die.....I can’t look helpless!”

This was the reason why the Royal Guards were fighting so desperately. They had to show Ark they didn’t need the hell training anymore. Death meant nothing in the face of possibly returning to the Silver Hand for several more months. Compared to that, death was nothing!

“Hahaha! Ark hyung-nim, hurray!”

Then Cupa raised his head and rushed forward. Then Keiko noticed the piece of iron in Cupa’s hand. It was the safety pin of a grenade!

-T-this....!

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Keiko reflexively retreated and fired the machine gun blindly at Cupa. Fresh blood flew out of the tattered Cupa. However Cupa crawled on the ground and approached Keiko. It was this. This dreadful tenacity! This was the reason why the Red squad felt overwhelmed.

–This bastard!

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Keiko moved back the moment the grenade exploded. Keiko rolled along the ground and confirmed his health when he got up. He received some damage but fortunately he still had 30% health left. However, Keiko showed no signs of anger as he looked at Cupa’s corpse. The sentiment seen in his eyes was admiration!

–That is a very fearful obsession. I've been on many battlefields but this is the first time I've encountered a soldier like you. Even a pioneer who can revive with the Fairy isn't so casual about the possibility of death. To laugh in the face of death, he is a true warrior. As a fellow warrior, I pay respect to your tenacity and bravery!

Keiko saluted Cupa's corpse. It was a homage paid between enemies!

–They aren't cowardly soldiers. I'm not sure what he meant but they are clearly fighting due to their loyalty to Ark.

One thing was certain. It was very different from what Keiko thought. Keiko looked at the direction where the red and blue lights were clashing with a conflicted expression.

-Captain-nim's eyes weren't wrong. It is clear that Ark is the federation's strongest warrior. The people following him believe he is the strongest warrior so they don't even fear death!

A sigh flowed from Keiki's mouth.

–Ah, I'm envious of Captain-nim. It is the highest honour for a Rama to fight the strongest warrior. Obviously Captain-nim who is fighting in this battle will feel a great satisfaction.....

It wasn't just him who had this idea. The Red squad members scattered all over the forest while fighting the Royal Guards were thinking the same thing. As for the Red Slaughterer who was the object of their envy.....

'What? This?'

.....He was baffled. He had finally discovered Ark's presence. Thus the Red Slaughterer had been expectant when confronting Ark. The name was Ark but he wasn't sure it was the genuine one. However, he was convinced of it after a few words from Ark at the beginning of the battle. The moment he had been waiting for had finally came

he thought. His fighting spirit was kindled! But confusion was the only thing the Red Slaughterer felt after 10 minutes.

‘Is this really Ark?’

The question didn’t disappear from his head throughout the fight. He knew Ark. No, any gamer would know. He was the gamer recognized as the strongest user in New World. His ability was recognized and he even became a director in the game publishing company. He was already a legend in South Korea’s gaming world. But the Red Slaughterer didn’t know him through his reputation. He had direct experience against Ark. So he knew. He knew how strong a user Ark was. He had experienced Ark’s strength first hand. But the Ark in front of him didn’t feel that strong.

‘Perhaps he hasn’t gained a lot of levels yet?’

That was one possibility. And he could feel the level difference through the sword. However, it wasn’t simply a matter of level difference. While level increased, the basics such as strength and agility also increased. But that didn’t always mean the users’ skills increased. It wasn’t just power behind the sword swings or the high agility to avoid attacks. The important thing was the users’ battle sense to take advantage of their capabilities. That was the charm of a virtual reality game! Even if level could influence victory or defeat, it was nothing without the user’s ability to take advantage of it. But Ark’s sword movements felt like a complete beginner. He felt like a completely different user.

.....It was still the same even now.

“Damn! Take this!”

Ark ran forward wielding his lightsaber. However the orbit of the sword was obvious. It was such a trivial attack that the Red Slaughterer couldn’t believe it was Ark. No, he didn’t want to believe it. However he couldn’t deny that the Ark in front of him was the ‘real’ one. That’s because only Ark would know the contents of the conversation they had before the battle.

‘For my rematch against this guy to be like this.....!’

Flames soared in the Red Slaughterer's heart. That anger exploded through the red lightsaber.

Snap, pajijjik!

The red light collided with the blue and a shockwave occurred. Ark was pushed by the shock wave and ended up on one knee. Ark had even activated his battle suit soon after the fight begun. The Red Slaughterer only had his body. Yet the battle was still one sided. Anger was in the Red Slaughterer's eyes as he looked at the powerless form of Ark.

–How disappointing Ark. You only have this much?

“Shut up, you bastard!”

Ark got to his feet and thrust his sword again. But the sword wielding Ark was no longer a threat. The Red Slaughterer blocked all of Ark's attacks and hit his wrist with the hilt of his lightsaber. It was the Red Slaughterer's skill to disarm the enemy! It was a highly technical skill and the success difficult to achieve. The lightsaber fell from Ark's hand towards the ground.

“D-dammit!”

Ark burst out and tumbled to pick up the sword. No, he was about to pick it up when the Red Slaughterer placed a knee on his stomach. It was a completely one sided match! There was no doubt that the difference between the Red Slaughterer and Ark was like between an adult and child.

“Cough! T-this is impossible.....”

–This is it. The rematch I dreamt about so badly was this pathetic.

The Red Slaughterer said coldly as he placed his sword to Ark's neck. Ark only had 5% health left. The outcome was obvious.

“Damn, who are you?”

Ark shouted the moment the Red Slaughterer's sword went up.

–I won't tell you my name. And now you'll never know. I won't send

a challenge to someone like you anymore. Rest assured and die.

The red beam descended towards his neck!

Tang-! Tang-! Tang-!

Shots rang out from the darkness. The Red Slaughterer reflexively activated a shield and turned his body. 2 of the bullets bounced off the shield but the 3rd one hit his shoulder. The Red Slaughterer took a few steps back and raised his head.

-Ugh, someone dared interfere.....you.....

The Red Slaughterer gazed towards the forest. The man was shaking and his whole body showed fatigue. It was a face he remembered. He was the blond youth who persistently stuck to him on Hanan, the warrior that the federation soldiers called Rapid.

-.....Another one?

The Red Slaughterer glared at the blond youth. However the blond youth didn't even look at the Red Slaughterer. He was staring at Ark with spellbound eyes.

"A-Ark?" Really.....you're Ark?"

-Get lost! This isn't the place for you!

The Red Slaughterer flew towards the blond youth. The blond youth belatedly noticed and tried to block but the red sword had already cut his thigh. However the blond youth pulled his trigger as he was falling. 3 bullets shot towards different vital spots! It was skill that the Red Slaughterer couldn't ignore.

-Sheesh, this guy!

Two bullets were stopped by the shield while the other one changed trajectory because of the lightsaber. He turned around and saw the blond youth throwing a grenade. The moment the Red Slaughterer was about to split apart the grenade with a lightsaber, he once again fired his gun. The bullets penetrated through the darkness and exploded the grenade.

Pepeng! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The unexpected explosion pushed the Red Slaughterer back. Then the blond youth ran with a limping leg and shouted.

“Now Ark! Your sword! You can’t die in a place like this!”

–I said this isn’t the place for you to interfere!

Tung!

The Red Slaughterer crossed the space like a bullet. Then the red sword was thrust through the blond youth’s chest. The blond youth flew back and moaned.

“U-unbelievable.....”

Ark had the lightsaber in front of him. However the sword once again fell from the Red Slaughterer’s consequent attacks. And the sword that was lost in the struggle rolled underneath the Red Slaughterer’s feet. It was like a cat treading on a miserable rat. The Red Slaughtered coldly glanced at Ark and the blond youth.

–Rapid, you came here to help this guy but.....look at him. This is the reality of the Ark who you held up as a hero. Isn’t it disappointing? But I feel an even bigger disappointment that you can’t even fathom.

The Red Slaughterer was talking but it just sounded like ‘#\$!##@\$#@##\$!##\$!#!##’ to the blond youth. His eyes were looking at Ark and he couldn’t hear anything. Ark’s helpless look was shocking. The blond youth got up with trembling legs and shouted.

“Ark, no! You....you can’t have such an expression on your face! Wake up!”

–It is impossible. This guy isn’t who you think he is. Now I have no more regrets about the name Ark. He is just one of many federation players. Armour armament!

The Red Slaughterer looked down at the struggling Ark and said. The space warped and armour like objects appeared. The

armour that looked like a living creature wrapped around the Red Slaughterer's body. It was the Rama's battle suit! However this battle suit was different from Ark's. The battle suit had sharp horns attached to it!

–As a last gift to the user I once thought about, I'll show you why I'm called the Red Slaughterer. Come out! Kusankya's secret arts, Hwaryun's Extermination!

Wiiiiii!

Light circulated intensely above the Red Slaughterer's head. Dozens of wheels were spinning fiercely! The wheels shot in two directions towards Ark and the blond youth. The blond youth hurriedly grabbed his pistol and raised it vertically.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The wheel impacted with the barrel and caused sparks. Once several wheels piled up, the pistol collapsed into small pieces. It made an unearthly noise as the wheel scratched continuously against his skin. The blond youth's health was already low after breaking through the numerous Rama warriors to reach here. The blond youth was instantly shredded apart by the wheels. The body was torn into small pieces. But the blond youth was still looking at Ark in his last moments. The wheels had headed towards a fleeing Ark's head! Ark fell as the wheel hit the back of the Hyde Helmet and broke it. Ark was pitiable until the very end.

-.....How empty.

The Red Slaughterer said with a bitter voice. Then he frowned as he looked at Ark.

–What? Why is this guy?

The Red Slaughterer knew Ark's face. He remembered the face from the days in New World. Ark's face was also exposed through the mass mediate after he became Beltana's hero. And the face the Red Slaughterer had been fighting was definitely Ark. But a completely different face appeared once the Hyde Helmet was split

apart.

–D-don't tell me this is the Hyde Helmet?

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Then he heard a yell from the rear. The Red Slaughterer reflexively turned around and confusion spread on his face. Dozens of blue swords flashed before his eyes. The Red Slaughterer hurriedly lifted his left arm.

–This! Shield!

Kakakaka! Kakakaka!

Dozens of blades scratched against the shield. The Red Slaughterer felt a tremendous pressure and took a few steps back. After he was pushed back 10 metres, the Red Slaughterer's shield broke.

–Kuak! Heat Wave!

A red aura emerged from the Red Slaughterer's body. There was a visible burn in the ground every time he took a step. The swords were broken by the aura he dispersed.

–Who are you?

“Me?”

The Red Slaughterer was looking at a man walking out of the forest. He was holding a blue lightsaber in front of him. The man grinned and said.

“Ark.”

Hero VS Hero (PART: 2)

According to law, the soldier's equipment depended on their field of expertise. Therefore the federation's armoury in Tatuine was divided into several sections. Rifles and swords, defence items for assaulters, pistols and daggers in the scout section, various communications equipment and support packs.....and there was a section for spies.

-Hyde Helmet

Item type: Helmet

Wearer Restriction: Level 31 (Body Coating Required)

Defense: 5 Durability: 30/30

A helmet that covers the entire face. This looks like a normal helmet but a special feature has been added. There is a special coating on the glass front so the opponent can't see your face. It also prevents all infrared scopes from detecting your name by setting a different character name. If you want to do bad things! If you want to hide your name! The Hyde Helmet is the best choice for a coward like you.

* If you commit a crime then the chaotic value will be applied to your original name.

<It is possible to change the name the opponent can see>

He found the Hyde Helmet there! Thus he thought of a plan.

"Huh?"

Slayer's eyes widened.

"What do you mean? I should be Ark-nim?"

"You heard me. Slayer-nim should wear the Hyde Helmet with my

name and face.”

“Why should I?”

“It is an opportunity.”

Ark smiled and replied.

“We received the quest from Marquis-nim but we still don’t know the situation on Athamas. If we just turn up on the battlefield then we won’t be able to grasp the situation. Slayer-nim is experienced but you might fall into an unforeseen trap. Then shouldn’t someone observe the enemy and the situation in order to complete the quest? Slayer, Leon and Melina had no military experience while the rest of my men are NPCs so only I’m eligible.”

However, the Red Slaughterer had challenged Ark. Ark needed to be there in order to attract the Red Slaughterer’s attention. Then he thought of something after seeing the Hyde Helmet. It was to make Slayer into ‘Ark-III!’

“Why me of all people?”

“The Red Slaughterer sent me a challenge so he knows about me to some extent. He would’ve obtained data from the Rama who fought me on Beltana. So he’ll know that I’m a warrior who uses a gun and sword.”

This was the reason he chose Slayer. The Royal Guards were NPCs. Melina was a female healer so she couldn’t even be considered and Leon was a firearms specialist. Slayer was the only warrior candidate.

“But can I really deceive him?”

“You can trick him. I’ll give Slayer-nim the word to make him believe you.”

“A word?”

“Lucifer.”

“Lucifer? What is that?”

“It is like a password. Anyway, if the Red Slaughterer is who I think he is then he will react to that word. This is the evidence that you are me.”

Ark said with a smile. However Slayer scratched his head with an unconfident expression.

“I understand what you’re saying. But I don’t know if I can accomplish.....”

“The only person I can request from is Slayer-nim. And didn’t you say it a short time ago? This is your chance. They won’t just talk about you on the battlefield. This is Slayer-nim’s chance.”

“Huh? My chance?”

“Didn’t you want to be a hero on the airship?”

Ark approached Slayer and whispered.

“Slayer-nim, listen to me. The Red Slaughterer is known as the Rama’s hero. That person sent me a challenge so it is possible to have a 1 on 1 fight with him. In other words, if Slayer-nim disguises as me then you’ll have a chance to fight the Rama’s hero. And if you knock that guy down.....”

“I-if I win?”

Slayer swallowed his saliva and asked. Ark looked at Slayer and laughed.

“The birth of Slayer, Athamas’ Hero.”

“A-Athamas’ hero!”

“Do you remember when I used the Hyde Helmet on Mt. Fargo? That was due to my celebrity status. After becoming Beltana’s Hero and being well known on the federation’s TV, I couldn’t walk around freely. The female users kept on surrounding me.....”

“F-female users!”

“It was very annoying because I wasn’t interested but wouldn’t it be different if I liked someone? For example, a female user you have

your eye on.....”

“Cough! Hrmm hrmm. No, well.....”

Slayer glanced at Melina who was wandering around the section before looking away. Ark had noticed for a while that Slayer and Leon were uncomfortable around him. That’s because Melina had started to pay attention to Ark. It was because of this reason that Slayer and Leon participated in this quest in the first place. They thought Melina had a crush on Ark because of his ‘Beltana’s Hero’ status. Their levels and skills were similar to Ark so they thought they could also become war heroes if given the chance. Well even if that wasn’t the case, they were still sold for 3 bottles of alcohol. Anyway, Ark’s flattery was effective. The words ‘female users’ were a direct hit.

“Huhuhu, I’ll do it!”

Slayer firmly grasped Ark’s hand. And the user who dreamt of a rosy future.....

Ark eyed the body near the Red Slaughterer’s feet. The dead body was covered in blood. It was an empty end for the user who dreamt of a rosy future.

‘Well I expected it to a certain extent but.....’

He hadn’t expected Slayer to win. Even if he was a warrior, Ark was an offensive fighter while Slayer was a tank. This was the reason Slayer died so easily. He threw away his shield which was his main equipment and used the lightsaber in order to pretend to be Ark. Therefore he couldn’t exert his full power. However, there was another decisive reason for Slayer’s defeat.

‘This guy, he’s strong!’

He hadn’t received the title of Rama’s Hero for no reason. No one could obtain fame for free. If a user received that type of fame then obviously he would be strong. But the Red Slaughterer’s attack was beyond what Ark imagined.

‘Isn’t this obvious?’

The Red Slaughterer was convinced Slayer was Ark thanks to the dialogue. And Ark was sure he was Lucifer based on his reaction. If he was Lucifer then naturally he would be strong. Therefore it was natural for Slayer to die one-sidedly. Yet it was still helpful. Slayer still had the stamina of a tank so he lasted for 10 minutes.

‘Now it is my turn!’

The Red Slaughterer stared at Ark and opened his mouth.

-.....In the end it was just a trick? I was confused but now it is easy to understand. But what is the proof that you’re really Ark?

“My skills.”

Ark tightened his grip on his sword. A blue light shot out from the hilt.

“I just want to ask you one thing Lucifer. What do you think is the ultimate goal?”

The Red Slaughterer narrowed his eyes at Ark’s question. However he then smiled and lifted his red lightsaber.

–I’m curious about your skills.

Tung!

The Red Slaughterer’s feet caused a hole in the ground. At the same time, the Red Slaughterer’s body shot forward like a projectile. A red afterimage trailed behind him.

Snap! Chwajijijijik!

He lifted his sword and felt a sharp pain in his shoulder. A lightsaber didn’t weigh a lot so it was hard to withstand a heavy iron sword. However the disadvantage disappeared with the explosive acceleration.

“Ugh!”

Ark retreated a few steps.

–Not yet! You haven't proved it yet!

The Red Slaughterer chased after Ark. And he unleashed a shower of onslaughts. The first blow didn't have the shortcomings of a lightsaber while the continuous attacks maximized the benefits of the lightsaber. Any other user wouldn't be able to withstand those attacks. Because they couldn't imagine such reckless attacks out of the blue. But the opponent was Lucifer. Therefore Ark's concentration was already at the limit before the battle. Therefore his battle mode was ON!

"You don't have to make so much noise....."

Ark said why dodging the Red Slaughterer's arms.

–You fool, you want to die.....

"Armour armament!"

Ark suddenly shouted. The space warped and armour sprung out around him. It was the battle suit that looked like an insect's carapace, the Hyper Drone! The moment the Hyper Drone covered Ark's body, it released a shockwave that pushed the Red Slaughterer back. Ark who had turned into a fully armoured warrior smiled and raised a finger.

"Bring it on. If you want it so badly then I'll carve the name Ark into your body."

–R-Rama battle suit? How do you.....?

"Do I have to explain it?"

–That's okay. I'll discover it by force.

"Ha, then you'll never know."

This time Ark was the one who attacked first. It was the same lightsaber as before but this time it was different. The battle suit increased all stats by 30%! Of course his physical abilities using the sword also increased. However there was more to the battle suit.

Snap, pajijjik!

Their shoulders shook as the two lightsabers clashed together. Then Ark raised the sword and kicked his foot as quick as lightning. The roundhouse kick caused the Red Slaughterer to go flying back! But this was a trick. The Red Slaughterer had jumped back the moment Ark kicked his chest. Yet he still felt the heavy blow down to his toes. This was the true meaning of Ark's battle suit. Space monsters typically had skin harder than monsters in the medieval ages. Some monsters had such hard skin that steel bullets would find difficult to penetrate! On the other hand, Ark was wearing armour and shoes made of synthetic material. The material was created using state of the art science but it was still basically cloth or leather. Wouldn't kicking a steel monster only fracture his foot?

This was true for an opponent wearing a battle suit. However that changed once Ark wore his battle suit. He wasn't sure what material it was but the battle suit was incredibly hard. So it was okay for him to kick the opponent! Ark's specialty was the use to taekwondo techniques.

"Heh, how is it?"

Ark turned around and smiled pleasantly. But the Red Slaughterer just laughed.

-Kukukuku.

"What? Did I hit you so hard that I created a hole in your lung?"

—This is it. Your kicks and the way you talk. Yes, this is the Ark that I remember.

"Ha, is that so? Did you become scared after remembering being beaten up by me?"

—It isn't necessary to remember it. Because I'll never forget it.

"I guess you were depressed."

—I was until today.

The Red Slaughterer answered as he strode forward. No more words were needed now. They already knew each other's identities

and purpose. That purpose would be shown through their swords! Only the strong would accomplish their purpose.

–I'll end this game here! Sword Detection!

The Red Slaughterer shot forward with his sword. The red light split through the darkness! However that red light soon encountered a blue one.

“Sonic Sword!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

There was a ringing sound and dust rose. It swirled up like a whirlwind and dispersed. Sharp claws shredded through the cloud of dust and the Red Slaughterer came closer! The sword seemed to appear in front of Ark in moments.

‘This guy’s battle suit is agile!’

It explained the unusually fast movement. Speed faster than the opponent. Speed was definitely a weapon that wreaked havoc in combat. But that wasn’t absolute.

–It is foolish to chase after speed with your eyes. No human can see a sword. My sword can hit your eyes, feet, shoulders, anywhere I want.

This was what his sword master taught him. Ark was hit over and over and experienced it through his bones. For a long time.....he had forgotten the teachings of his mentor after reaching the ultimate position in New World.

Snap! Chwajijijijik!

That spark revived through the conflict of lightsabers.

‘When I stop it has to be smooth. If I attack it has to be short and bold!’

Ark muttered and started using footwork. He stepped forward and started twisting his sword. The blue light that had been waving like a wild beast started flowing smoothly! The teachings that he suddenly

remembered was manifested through his body. Ark's blue sword started forming a brilliant pattern in the darkness. No movements were wasted.

–As expected from Ark!

The Red Slaughterer said with glee. And the red lightsaber also started to create a colourful pattern. It was like they were competing over who could create better patterns. However, the mood changed the moment the two lights conflicted.

Kwa! Kwa! Kwa! Kwa! Kwa!

There were continuous bursts of light! The two lights clashed without any breaks in the darkness. The beam swords unleashed unstable electromagnetic power every time it clashed. It felt like every hair on his skin was standing up. That feeling intensified with every clash of the sword.

Kwa! Kwa! Kwa! Kwa! Kwa!

This feeling! Ark was absorbed in the fight. He didn't have any idea in his head. He didn't even feel the pain as the red lightsaber cut his skin several times. The only thing he saw was the trajectory of the Red Slaughterer's sword. And he would kick whenever there was a chance. He breathed carefully as he attacked and defended! But he couldn't remain in that feeling forever.

'.....It is impossible.'

Ark and the Red Slaughterer's skills were almost equal. However, Ark started being pushed once the battle continued for a long time. The reason why his level!

'The Red Slaughterer must be at least 20 levels higher than me.'

This was due to spending time on the battlefield. If he died on the battlefield then he wouldn't gain any experience. While the Red Slaughterer has killed dozens of people on the battlefield, Ark had kept on dying before he received the title of Beltana's Hero. Of course, Ark had reduced his sleeping hours to spend more time in the game. However, he had spent the early stages of the game

cleaning pipes on R-14 and digging on Beltana. He might be 10 levels higher than regular users but he couldn't be compared to the Red Slaughterer. If their skills were higher than it was natural for the one with a higher level to have the advantage. That's because they would deal more damage! Therefore it was more painful! But that wasn't the only reason.

'Damn, if only I could use Galaxy Sword.....'

Ark had few battle skills compared to his level. That's because he learnt a lot of non-battle skills like hacking in the early stages and his body coating focused more on survival. It didn't matter when fighting monsters but the lack of battle skills was a disadvantage against users. It's because the opponent could figure out the effect of the skill. Of course, he learnt Khafra Fencing when he became Elim's Heir but that required Force not mental power. Therefore Ark used meditation while waiting at headquarters to change mental power to 260 Force. Ark had used all that Force in the surprise attack. Well, he destroyed the Red Slaughterer's shield thanks to that attack but he only had 10 Force left. Therefore Khafra Fencing was sealed after using Galaxy Sword. That's why Ark had to use Sonic Sword that required mental power instead. The only skill he could use with his lightsaber was Sonic Sword. On the other hand, the Red Slaughterer.....

-Detection!

The red lightsaber constantly attacked.

-Blood Sword!

The red lightsaber suddenly increased to dozens of swords!

-Dragon Sword Break!

Dragon Sword Break was a quick stab attack! The combat skills people would brag about constantly poured out. And Ark's sword teacher didn't show him how to deal with skills like this. Therefore his health decreased with every skill until it reached 10%. However the Red Slaughterer still had 40% health left. He couldn't rely on luck against a user of a similar skill.

‘Any more is impossible. Then.....’

Kakak! Pepepeng!

Ark pushed against the sword and shouted.

“Damn, this is cheating!”

–*Cheating?*

“Indeed! Don’t you know? You’re much higher level than me. Your stats are higher so of course you’ll perform better. Fighting in such a situation wouldn’t be fair. Don’t you think it is a little cowardly?”

–*This is a game. It is up to you to raise the level and learn skills. I can understand if the starting time is different but you started at the same time as me. If you have a lower level or fewer skills then it means you didn’t make an effort. So why are you talking about unfair?*

The Red Slaughterer said with a ludicrous expression.

–*This place is the battlefield. How can you talk about cowardice in a place like this? This is a warrior’s fight. Fight openly and die a warrior’s death.*

“I don’t want to! Binding Sword!”

Ark shouted angrily and twisted his sword. The Red Slaughterer instantly raised his sword as a flash crossed the darkness. However, this wasn’t an attack skill but Binding Sword. It was a skill that tied up the enemy’s movement! The flash wound around the Red Slaughterer’s body.

-Your attack has hit the target!

<The enemy’s movements will be sealed for 2 seconds!>

The message popped up in front of him! Ark cried out as he ran into the forest.

“Sorry but I’m busy. I’ll see you later.”

It was the combo of Binding Sword and running away! This was the reason Ark felt an attachment to Binding Sword. He could escape when it was disadvantageous! Once again, Ark's mission wasn't to defeat the Red Slaughterer. It was to delay him while the federation army started their plan to reverse the military situation. He had already delayed him for a sufficient amount of time. He also checked that the Red Slaughterer was Lucifer. All his objectives were achieved so there was no reason to fight anymore. The Red Slaughterer's expression became murderous at Ark's combo.

–You cowardly wretch! You call yourself a warrior!

“Stop playing around. This is a battlefield. Anything can change in 1 second.”

The legendary gamer Ark said that while running away!

–I won't miss!

2 seconds wasn't a long time. The Red Slaughterer was soon freed and chased after Ark. Furthermore, the Red Slaughterer's battle suit was fast so he instantly reduced the distance. And 1 minute after Ark entered the forest.

Kwakwang!

A tree in front of Ark started shaking. The pine tree received a huge dent after being hit by the Red Slaughterer. He had transferred his body using high speed technology and flew in front of Ark. But he had expected this!

–You will die.....

“18 Barrage!”

Ark shouted as he threw his body towards the Red Slaughterer. At the same time, steam spewed from his battle suit clad shoulders and his arms moved at an incredible pace. It was the deadly skill that poured out 18 rapid fire steel fists! There was no way to escape once hit.

“Dadadada!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Ark pumped his fists like a bulldozer! The Red Slaughterer hadn't expected the surprise attack and his chest was turned to rags. So one hit, two hit, three hit, four hit.....finally all his fists were poured out!

"Pant pant pant!"

-The Hyper Drone's mana has been exhausted.

<Hyper Drone will be recalled to its dimension and it can't be summoned for another 10 hours>

The battle suit disappeared from Ark's body. However.....

-Hu. Was this your last card?

The Red Slaughterer said as he looked at the gasping Ark. 18 fists had impacted with his chest but he only lost 10% health. The damage of 18 Barrage depended on the mana left in the battle suit. However, he had exerted too much power in the battle and the mana had been depleted. Ark was aware of this. That was the reason he chose to run away after using Binding Sword.

-Your battle suit has been recalled and you can't compete anymore.

"You still don't understand?"

Ark lifted his head and grinned. He raised his middle finger towards the Red Slaughterer and said.

"You're already dead!"

It was the death sentence! The Red Slaughterer couldn't imagine the upcoming horror.....

-.....Are you crazy

"Heh, its fine if you don't believe me. These hell hounds will guide you to hell. Hell hounds!"

Bark bark bark! Bark bark bark!

2 dogs ran out of the bushes towards the Red Slaughterer. They were dogs with the head of a person. While the Red Slaughterer was tied up with Biding Sword, he had invoked the Ikram rune when running away. The bodies offered were Slayer and the blond youth! They were dogs with the faces of the people the Red Slaughterer killed. He stepped back when the hell hound tackled him!

–Heok! W-what.....?

The Red Slaughterer burst out with confusion as he disappeared. Then a voice was heard from the bottom.

–Trap! S-surely not?

“Didn’t I tell you? You’re already dead.”

Ark looked down at the open hole in the ground and smiled. The Red Slaughterer was tangled up with the hell hounds in the ground.

‘My level isn’t sufficient to fight against the Red Slaughter 1 on 1. He also has a bunch of powerful Rama warriors with him.’

Ark’s mission wasn’t to kill the Red Slaughterer. But even if the federation’s strategy succeeded, Ark’s party would still be completely wiped out. Ark had no intention of letting that happen. So he thought desperately while waiting at headquarters and came up with this trap! While the Royal Guards lured the Red squad and Slayer was fighting the Red Slaughterer, Ark had remained in the forest to create this trap. He dug a hole at a location that wasn’t far away! By the time Slayer died, Ark had dug a hole 20 metres deep! This was due to his advanced digging.

–You cowardly wretch!

“You’re saying the same things again? Didn’t you say there are no cowardly acts on the battlefield?”

–I didn’t mean something like this! You should be ashamed!

“Do you think I would change my viewpoint? Didn’t you say it? Level and skill is also a strength. I admit it. But there is another way to win

against the enemy. I diligently dug this hole and covered it. And then I acted in a drama and lured you here. Do you think that is easy? I'm not embarrassed but proud."

–Don't make me laugh! Do you think you can beat me with a trap like this?

The Red Slaughter shouted while taking out the hell hound with Slayer's face. Ahh, Slayer.....even when reincarnated as a dog.....the poor guy. But Ark was unmoved.

"Of course it would be difficult with just a trap."

Ark laughed and took out a metal sphere into the trap. It was the grenade he collected from the federation armoury.

–T-this is?

"It is the devastating blow to send you to the afterlife. Please receive it carefully."

Ark pulled out the grenade's safety pin and waved goodbye.

–You.....you.....Ark!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

There was a roar and the trap was engulfed in flames. The Red Slaughterer and hell hound were buried as the walls of the hole collapsed. Ark whistled as he took out his shovel and walked over.

And.....Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

He filled the hole completely with soil.

"Heh, Lucifer is no big deal."

Ark laughed as he wiped the sweat off his forehead. He felt an exhilarating feeling in his stomach. But the Lucifer-Red Slaughterer competition wasn't finished with this. Lucifer's goal wasn't to win on this battlefield. The reason Lucifer sent the challenge was to verify his identity. Ark was also the same. He came to see Lucifer but he didn't think this was the end of it. In Galaxian, Lucifer was a user

with an immortal body so it wouldn't end with just one fight. He won this battle but Lucifer was stronger than Ark. He couldn't be pleased when considering the next battle.

'From now on I have to increase my strength to stop Lucifer's growth!'

Lucifer brought up power on the battlefield. In other words, Lucifer's support base was the Rama!

'The Rama already have Hanan so I can't allow them to get Athamas!'

This was another reason to win the war. He couldn't assume they would win even if he defeated Lucifer.

"Once you join the confluence area Scouts and should be operational."

Ark fired the signal flare and took out his air board.

"Wait? The face of the blonde man on the hell hound seems slightly familiar.....do I know him from somewhere? Well it doesn't matter. Let's go, Super Board!"

Wiiiiii!

The air board crossed the forest. He left area C-17 that was covered in Chaff behind him.

Flying the Federation's Flag.....

“Rama assault units have broken through B-13, 15,19!”

“The 5th guerrilla unit in area B has been wiped out!”

“There are reports that a Rama army is advancing into area A! Our current troops won't be able to hold out for long!”

“If the defense lines in area A collapsed then they will reach headquarters!”

“There is no more time to wait!”

The voices of the communication soldiers exclaimed hysterically. Let's talk about the current situation of the federation army. Athamas and Hanan were the most fiercely contested planets in the Bellin constellation. The federation and Rama had already been there long enough to determine the location of the headquarters. The only thing left was to breakthrough! That's why both sides had no choice but to pour extensive amounts of resources and compete day and night. However their armies were almost equal. Both sides couldn't get a decisive chance to win and it became a war of attrition. Then they heard the Aschulat was going to enter the war.

‘If reinforcement arrives then we can change the military situation!’

The problem was the Rama also obtained this information. The Rama installed an antenna in area E to interfere with the synchronization between the Aschulat and federation's headquarters. Then the Rama entrusted their key attacks to the Red squad. The Red squad was led by the Rama hero called the Red Slaughterer. The battles took place in the forests covering Athamas. And the Red squad boasted the invincible power of the Red Slaughterer! The federation units were quickly destroyed with their arrival. Just their existence was intimidating for the federation!

-The Red squad has entered this area with the Red Slaughterer!

The overwhelming fame! Just the name alone exerted a huge power on the federation soldiers.

‘Does the federation have a soldier that can deal with the Red Slaughterer?’

Then Beltana’s Hero Ark was sent to Athamas! However Ark didn’t seem that reliable to Hasullo. He was a war hero but Beltana’s battlefield was small compared to Athamas. He wouldn’t be able to get such achievements in a place like this. However the person who recommended them was Marquis Martin.

‘It is worth a try!’

No, he had no choice but to see. There was no way to reverse the military situation with the Red squad present. Therefore Hasullo decided on a life and death strategy while Ark was slowing down the Red Slaughterer. However things turned out more serious than expected. The federation had divided the battlefield into different grids. Headquarters was located in area A. Each grid was 50 kilometres. And the places where both sides collided were the C and D area. But the Rama had just broken through area B and had reached area A. They only needed to make 50 km to reach.

“Commander-nim, there are more of them! The news you just heard is already wrong! The Rama would reach headquarters by the time we recall our troops!”

“No, not yet.....a little more.....”

“Commander-nim!”

The soldier shouted with an uneasy expression. Then the communication soldier watching the monitor spoke to Hasullo.

“The signal flare has risen in area C-17!”

“Flare! Then Ark?”

“Yes, the decoded signal information.....the Red Slaughterer is dead.....”

The communication soldier who deciphered the message stuttered and turned to look at Commander Hasullo with a red face.

“H-he did it! Commander-nim, Ark.....Beltana’s Hero Ark.....he defeated the Red Slaughterer!”

“That’s it!”

Hasullo slammed his fist on the dashboard and got up.

“Send a message to all soldiers. The federation will step on the Rama! All troops on standby should advance immediately. The time has finally come to end the war!”

Commander Hasullo cried out in a face red with excitement. 1000 km away, the Rama commander Thor’s face was dyed with confusion. It was due to the report that came in from the battlefield.

–What did you say just now? The Red Slaughterer was killed in battle?

–We heard the federation soldiers hollering about it on the wide frequency channels. The Red Slaughterer battled a federation warrior in C-17 and died.

–Cut the crap! He is an undefeated hero. It is impossible for the federation to kill him! The Chaff cut off radio contact in C-17 so it is probably just groundless rumours.

–The Chaff has disappeared from area C-17.

-What?

–Although I can sense the signals from the Red squad’s Nymphes, I can’t detect the Red Slaughterer’s at all.

–Then the Red Slaughterer was really killed?

–At the moment, it seems so.....

–By who? Who defeated the Red Slaughterer?

–He is called Ark.

-Ark? Is it that Ark.....?

-He is the federation's hero that the Red Slaughterer sent a challenge to.

-So stupid! He was defeated by the opponent he sent a challenge to?

Thor shouted with a furious face. Then a nearby communication soldier turned around with a puzzled expression.

-Commander-nim, it is serious!

-What is it?

-There was a report from the scouting unit that stayed behind in the D area. 5000 federation soldiers are moving from there to area E. The majority are tanks and there is 1 Gigantic included.

-W-what? 5,000? Isn't that an error? How did they appear in area D that is right in front of headquarters?

-I checked it many times. There is no doubt.

-.....A trick!

Thor ground his teeth together. He had been too relaxed. Shortly after the Chaff was scattered in area C-17, the Rama pursued the retreating federation troops to their defense line in area B. They had fought the federation troops over the last few months yet they had collapsed so easily. Of course Thor had thought it was easy but he hadn't worried that much about it. That was a mistake.

'Those guys retreated to lure our troops in!'

Thor's judgment was correct.

This was Hasullo's plan. He hid troops in the important D area and rallied them after the Rama chased the federation army back to area B. The problem was that the federation troops were heading towards area E while the Rama were in area B. One thing was clear.

‘Their aim is the antenna base in area E!’

Now most of the Rama troops were heading towards the federation’s headquarters. It would be difficult to stop the 5,000 federation soldiers with just the defense troops at the antenna base.

‘They’ve already entered area A so it will be difficult to reach the federation troops that are 150 km away. There is also the risk of being attacked from behind. The only way left is to destroy their headquarters first!’

–Inform the leaders in area A!

Thor lifted his head and yelled.

–It doesn’t matter what damage there is. Use every method possible to take out the enemy’s headquarters as soon as possible! It doesn’t matter what their plan is if we occupy their headquarters. Keep this in mind! The Bellin constellation will be ours the moment we win Athamas!

However Thor hadn’t considered one thing. The backbone of the Rama’s attacks came from the Red squad and Red Slaughterer. And in the federation army.....

“Hyung-nim!”

Hegel ran out of the bushes. Following him was Mellin, Berad, Melina, and Leon.

“The other members?”

“We’re the only ones remaining.”

Leon answered Ark’s question.

“The Red squad members were really no joke.”

They knew this before arriving in Athamas. They were called the Rama’s strongest unit. It was impossible to take care of all of them. Plus there were 20 people in the Red squad. Excluding Ark and

Slayer, Dark Eden only had 13 people. Even if they lured the Red squad away, it was beyond their power to take everyone out. Leon's shredded body was proof of that. He sighed and said.

"I was fortunate. Some federation soldiers came and gave support while I was running away from them. But the decisive reason behind my survival was Ark-nim's men. I've battled with NPCs before but this is the first time I've seen something like this. Anyway.....their mentality is really no joke. It is the first time I've seen a NPC smile as they self-destructed."

"Indeed."

Melina also added with an expression of admiration. Then Leon studied her face and said in a low voice.

"Well, Melina-nim and I were still the best."

As expected, he was conscious about Melina's words. They had promised to meet here after there was a signal flare. But the battle with the Red Slaughterer had taken longer than expected. It was 20 minutes between encountering the Red Slaughterer and the signal flare being fired. Therefore Ark thought it was highly likely everyone would be wiped out. It was good that he even managed to hold out for 20 minutes considering the Red Slaughterer's skill. Yet 5 members were still alive. While it was expected for Leon and Melina, that fact that Hegel and Mellin who had low combat skills survived was a surprise.

"If the battle continued for any longer then we wouldn't have endured it."

7 Royal Guards died while they only managed to take out 3 of the Red squad. At first they fought but then started running away when it became too difficult.

"Those guys suddenly retreated after Ark fired the signal flare."

"Perhaps the Rama ordered them to ascertain the fate of their hero."

"Then the Red Slaughterer....."

“Buried.”

Ark smiled and replied. Hegel, Mellin and Berad cheered with excited expressions.

“Ohhh! As expected from Hyung-nim! Didn’t I tell you? The Red Slaughterer isn’t a match for Hyung-nim. Of course. Hyung-nim is invincible! The sacrifices weren’t in vain!”

“Then Slayer?”

“He fought bravely but unfortunately didn’t make it.”

To be exact, Slayer fought bravely as a dog. Well they didn’t need to know that. Ark roughly described the situation to Hegel, Mellin, Berad, Melina and Leon.

“This is more than I expected. Thanks for the good work. You guys also went through some trouble.”

“Yes Hyung-nim. Our members.....they all fought bravely!”

Hegel replied with huge tears in his eyes.

“Yes, they fought without fearing death. Hegel, Berad and I are also prepared to die at any time. We trained for this moment to be with you. I look forward to withstanding any difficult situation with you. As long as we’re with you!”

Mellin added quickly.

“Of course! I’m prepared to throw my life away at any time!”

Berad nodded as he lifted a hammer onto his shoulder. Melina murmured with an impressed look after seeing Hegel, Mellin and Berad.

“Ark-nim is incredible. For NPCs to trust a user so much.....”

She was mistaken. The Royal Guards just didn’t want to be sent back to the Silver Hand. Ark had no intention of sending the Royal Guards back to the Silver Hand. However the Royal Guards didn’t know that so they thought they had to be really good.

'It looks like the stat distribution method worked. The framework is in place so now it is time to raise their level. Levels are necessary if we have to fight Lucifer and the Red squad again. Okay. Once this is completed, I'm going to take the Royal Guards and go level up!'

Ark started making plans for the future. Anyway!

"The war hasn't finished yet. According to the briefing from headquarters, the main force of the federation army is heading towards the antenna base. Now it is a fight against time. We have to join the army as quickly as possible to ensure that the antenna is destroyed."

"But isn't area E 150 km from here?"

"You don't need to worry about that."

Ark muttered as he looked up at the night sky. Missiles were flying at a rapid pace from the federation headquarters. When it was 300 metres away, they exploded and dropped parachutes. They were the capsules that Ark had ridden here. However this time soldiers weren't the ones inside them. Bikes were attached to the falling parachute! After the signal was confirmed, headquarters had sent him hover bikes. Ark got on the bike and looked at Hegel.

"Hegel, calculate the shortest route to the antenna base."

"I've already completed it."

Thanks to the training with the Silver Hand, Hegel transferred the 3D map immediately. Ark checked the map and vigorously turned the handle.

"Okay. Let's go!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The bikes flew across the forest. Hasullo had sent him high class bikes that moved at 300 km/hr. But moving 300 km/hr in a forest was like committing suicide. In contrast, 100 km/hr was like a walk in the park. But the Rama were in area A while the federation were in area E. The areas between them were empty. Thanks to crossing an

empty battlefield, Ark was able to reach the antenna base in 1 and a half hours.

Pepeng! Pepeng! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Bursts of flashes tore up the darkness. As expected, a fierce battle was taking place around the base. The federation soldiers were surrounding the base along with 10 tanks and a Gigantic. But the Rama were resisting quite well. The antenna base was like a fortress. Dozens of turrets mounted on the wall were firing wildly. Numerous soldiers died with every attack !

“This is a battlefield.....!”

Leon said as he was overwhelmed. Then a tank arrived and one person jumped out.

“Are you Ark-nim?”

“Yes, that’s me.”

“It’s an honour to meet you. I’m Captain Cross in charge of this operation.”

Cross saluted him with respectful eyes. The federation soldiers had already been informed that Ark defeated the Red Slaughterer. That’s why a captain with 5,000 troops under him was saluting Ark. It was a tribute to the federation warrior that knocked down the Rama’s hero!

“Can I ask about the battle?”

“Of course.”

A 3D image of the battlefield appeared from Cross’ Nymph and he explained.

“Currently the federation army is overwhelming in troops and firepower. However the resistance from the Rama is more than I expected. The antenna base is equipped with a high class GEM and it has intercepted half of our shells. The other half has been blocked by the dual shield covering the base.”

“Then we have to compete with troops.”

Ark nodded and replied. The Rama developed science and technology earlier than the federation. Ironically, science and technology didn't have that much of an effect on the battlefield. No airships could work thanks to the orbiting satellites Dark Star. The GEM and shield also halved the power of the tanks and Gigantic. The Dark Star, GEM and shield didn't affect one thing!

Infantry. Therefore the advanced science ended up causing a battle between infantry. Soldiers used SF weapons like lightsabers and ray guns.

“So I've ordered troops to the shield control tower but they've received damage from the many bunkers around it. If we can only penetrate that one point.....”

“Leave it to us.”

“Huh?”

Leon and Cross said simultaneously.

“I-Is it okay?”

“Captain-nim, you know there is no time right? I have no choice but to try.”

He had defeated the Red Slaughterer and surrounded the antenna base. But that situation wouldn't always remain favourable. Right now the Rama's main army was attacking the federation headquarters. They had to destroy the antenna base before the federation headquarters was destroyed. Like he said, it was a fight against time. In the end, Cross was forced to agree with him.

“How can I help you?”

“Just support me please. And give me a federation flag.”

“The federation flag!”

“I will fight while carrying the destiny of the federation army.”

“I understand. Good luck!”

Cross saluted again. Then a flag with the symbol of the federation on it was given to Mellin and the preparations were complete!

“Let’s go!”

Kuaaaaaaaah-!

Ark, Hegel, Berad, Leon, Melina and Mellin headed off with the fluttering flag! The 6 bikes carrying the warriors rushed towards the antenna base.

–The federation’s bikes are charging forward!

–They’re carrying a large flag.....crazy bastards, kill them.

-Shoot! Tear through that flag and show them the might of the Rama!

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Hundreds of bullets crossed the space. Ark just turned the handle and accelerated even further while shouting.

“Don’t be afraid! You won’t die from a few bullets. If you continue moving then the hit rate will fall. Only worry about the RPGs. Hegel, calculate and report the trajectory of the heavy artillery!”

“Yes, Hyung-nim!”

Hegel replied.

“RPGs are flying towards Hyung-nim from your 3 o’clock, 4 o’clock and 9 o’clock. It will land 50 metres in front of Hyung-nim after 3 seconds!”

Hegel could now mentally calculate the trajectory thanks to his training with Heksu of the Silver Hand. They avoided the shells that impacted with the ground.

“Leon-nim, the heavy troopers!”

“I know!”

Tutung! Tutung! Tutung!

Leon lay flat on the bike and fired his rail gun. The rays went through the heads of the Rama's heavy troopers.

-Headshot-II!

<You have inflicted a serious blow and the enemy will receive additional 175% damage>

It was a cool headshot.

"Units 1, 2, 3 and 4, cover the bikes!"

Kwakwang! Kwakwang! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The federation army started to support them from the rear. Most of the Rama were inside the shield to avoid being hit by the tanks. However, their visibility dropped thanks to the outpouring of attacks. This changed once Ark got to a close range.

Ping! Ping! Ping!

Blood gushed out from several holes in his body. It wasn't just Ark. Hegel was avoiding it reasonably well but he couldn't fight back while Leon and Mellin were covered with several gunshot wounds. It was the same for Mellin and Berad. In particular, Mellin was bleeding a lot because the flag he was carrying was a target. However Mellin didn't complain even once.

"Hahaha! This is nothing! I've had bombs aimed at me so I won't be afraid of something like bullets!"

This was the result of the hell training. Meanwhile Ark had arrived in front of the base's gate.

"Mind Shield!"

-The Mind Shield has been activated.

<A shield with 360 durability has been generated around the body. The shield will reduce all damage by 40~60% until the durability falls to 0.

In addition, the effect of Backstab or Sudden Blow will be nullified by 100%>

The message appeared as Ark's body was engulfed in a blue sphere. Ark pulled on the handle as much as possible and jumped off the bike. The bike hit the gate directly!

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Flames soared and a portion of the gate collapsed.

–Someone has entered! Tear him apart!

Rama warriors holding swords and machine guns came running out of the smoke. No, this was what he wanted. A flash ran between the Rama warriors. Blood gushed out wherever the flash went. After a while, drops of blood poured down like rain from Ark's sword.

–What, what the? This guy?

–Kuack! Don't just stand there looking! Attack at once!

Half a dozen Rama warriors holding swords or hammers flocked to him. Once again there were flashes of blue light and blood followed the trajectory. The sword seemed like it was possessed! Leon was just as confused as the Rama by Ark's movements. But Ark didn't hear anything.

'Yes, this is the feeling!'

In fact, the military situation wasn't the only reason why Ark rushed here. Ark had been impatient since leaving C-17. That's because of his battle with the Red Slaughterer. Their two lightsabers had kept on clashing. During the contest of swords, Ark had felt something sleeping wake up inside him. Ark knew the identity of that feeling. Awakening!

It was a moment of enlightenment. The spiritual enlightenment had hit him like a lightning bolt. The experience from countless fights had accumulated in his body and finally awakened. That awakening had occurred during his confrontation with the Red Slaughterer. He felt a

tremendous sense of fulfilment. He wanted to continue using the sword on the battlefield. Whether he won or lost the battle, Ark wanted to completely regain that feeling. Therefore he had felt impatient while riding the bike. The end of the fight with the Red Slaughterer.....

‘I don’t feel completely alive yet!’

Every cell in his body was calling out for battle! The Rama warriors around him looked like they were moving slowly. The angle of the weapon, the way they were going to move, he understood it all. Ark moved his sword while caught in that feeling.

Sakak-!

The Rama warriors collapsed. When the Rama fired their guns, he avoided the bullets and plunged into the opening.

Wiiing! Seokeok!

The lightsaber moved freely in connected motions.

–Oh my god! T-that sword!

The Rama warriors watching from the sidelines were stunned. Meanwhile Leon with his rail gun, Berad and Melina had made it through the gate. But bullets were still being fired at them. Ark had created a hole and entered the shield. A bunker situated 10 metres away was pouring particularly heavy fire.

“Mellin, stay behind me! Shield!”

Ark used the shield and pushed towards the bunker. Blood poured from his legs at the onslaught of bullets. But that just made Ark feel even more exhilarated. This was truly a battlefield! Inside his head, intense orchestra music seemed to reach its peak. And he finally arrived in front of the bunker.

“Now!”

Ark kicked the barrel of the machine gun firing at him and shouted. Mellin who was following him quickly threw an explosive into the bunker. Thanks to his training in handling explosives, the C-6

contained the maximum firepower!

Kwa kwang! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Flames poured out from the hole in the ground. The enemy inside the bunker were burned to a crisp.

“That’s it, now…….”

“Ark, behind you! It’s dangerous!”

Mellin shouted desperately from near him. When he turned around, a Rama warrior wearing a tattered battle suit had emerged from the bunker and was aiming a RPG towards him. Smoke emerged and the shell flew towards him. Ark had already lost a lot of health reaching the bunker. If he was hit by the RPG at this distance then it was 100% death! Ark’s body automatically reacted.

“I won’t die!”

His blue ray headed towards the shell. Then the ray struck down the black shell. The orbit of the shell was redirected and it flew towards a group of Rama warriors dozens of metres away. Mellin’s mouth dropped open.

“C-changing the trajectory of the shell with your sword…….”

Suddenly a message window appeared in front of Ark.

-A new skill (☆☆) has been learnt.

Sword Defense (User, Active): After civilization developed, firearms were recognized as an efficient and easy to use weapon. Now warriors can’t just use swords like before. In order to overcome the disadvantages of a sword against a gun, a technique called Sword Defense was developed.

Sword Defense uses electromagnetic energy generated to change the trajectory of a bullet. However, this technique requires the right timing and incredible concentration in order to be successful. Therefore the success rate depends on timing and concentration.

<You can change the trajectory of a bullet using a beam sword>

* Sword Mastery Lv.3 or higher required.

‘.....This is great!’

Ark felt refreshed. He had encountered the Red Slaughterer for the first time in the forest. While watching from the forest, he saw the Red Slaughterer changing the trajectory of Leon’s bullet. Ark’s body had remembered that scene in his moment of crisis. The result was Sword Defense!

–Unbelievable! For a human to know the Red Slaughterer’s technique.....?

The Rama warriors looked at Ark with incredulous eyes. In fact, Ark was also the same. He never thought he could change the trajectory of the shells. But now wasn’t the time to be surprised.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Dozens of blue swords appeared and flew forward. It was his strongest battle skill Galaxy Sword! The Red Slaughterer had stopped it so he couldn’t check out the skill properly but it had a huge effect on the Rama warrior holding the RPG.

-Kuaaaaak!

He could now determine the true power of Galaxy Sword. The Rama warrior’s entire body was shredded in an instant. The scene was clearly imprinted in the eyes of the federation and Rama soldiers.

“Mellin, flag!”

Ark held the flag and ran over to the bunker. Then he shook the flag and yelled.

“I am Ark!”

“Ark! Our hero!”

“The true hero who defeated the Red Slaughterer!”

The federation soldiers boiled with excitement.

“That guy is the hero of the galactic federation! That flag represents the will of the galactic federation! All warriors of the galactic federation, follow our hero. He will lead us to victory!”

“Waaahhhhhh! Follow Ark!”

The hiding federation soldiers simultaneously rushed towards the base. This was the reason why Ark brought the flag. The value of a hero on the battlefield wasn't simply taking down the enemy. Right now the total of both armies was 8,000 people. Even if the hero took down 100 enemies alone, it wouldn't affect the outcome. Yet this was the reason why the presence of a hero had a profound impact! It was because the allies' morale would rise explosively. It wasn't just the words that left his mouth. The sight of the hero was imprinted in the eyes of the allies. Ark showed them the image of him capturing the bunker. The bunker had the symbol of the federation flying above it! With their morale so high, the federation soldiers and even the mercenary groups didn't fear dying against the Rama. The momentum had fully tilted towards the federation troops.

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The federation soldiers rushed towards the base. The Rama desperately tried to resist but they couldn't do anything against the federation's high morale. After 20 minutes, flames soared as all the bunkers in the base were destroyed. And once the federation soldiers occupied it.....

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

Flames soared as the shield around the antenna base was destroyed.

“The shield was released! Penetrate the defense with the tanks and Gigantic!”

A bombardment of shells followed! The lasers intercepted some of them but it couldn't stop even half of the shells. The federation continued their bombardment until the last of the defense turrets collapsed. The thousands of military troops entered the base. The

head of the federation army.....

“Charge!”

Ark held the flag in one hand and the lightsaber in the other. After 20 minutes, the antenna attached to the upper part of the base exploded.

–Unbelievable!

A desperate sigh emerged from Mukah’s mouth. He was the leader of the 1st division of the Rama’s army and in charge of the attack on the federation headquarters. The federation were attacking the antenna base so Mukah hurried and they received a lot of damage. He had mobilized 6,000 troops, 20 heavy tanks and 2 Gigantic! It was all of the Rama except for the defense troops left at the antenna base and headquarters. And they finally destroyed the shield around the federation’s headquarters.

Chwa chwa chwa chwa! Chwa chwa chwa chwa!

Suddenly beams of energy exploded from within the headquarters. Dozens of warriors rushing towards headquarters were hit by the enemy beams and melted! But instead of feeling hot, Mukah’s body became cold as ice.

–This is the beam from the Aschulat’s particle cannons!

One thing was clear. The destruction of the antenna base allowed for reinforcements. Mukah had a premonition of defeat after seeing the Aschulat troops. The Rama commander Thor also identified the situation.

–.....Is it too late?

Thor moaned as he looked at the huge monitor. The monitor showed the antenna base collapsing while spewing black smoke. Thor was staring blankly at the monitor when he heard a voice in his ear.

–The 1st division captain Mukah has sent an emergency transmission. The Aschulat troops at the federation headquarters is

steadily increasing. He is asking for a command to retreat. And he asked us to prepare the Star Gate for retreat.

-Retreat? How can we retreat!

Thor shouted with a displeased expression. Then a lieutenant said with a sigh.

–It is like the division captain said. According to our intelligence, the Aschulat has organized 10,000 reinforcements for the Bellin constellation. We won't be able to deal with it if even half of those troops are committed to Athamas. If the forces that destroyed the antenna base returned to headquarters then our army will be wiped out. The federation hasn't lost as much troops as us. Now that the Aschulat have entered the war, it is best to preserve our troops and return to the home planet.

–I'll have to tell the Emperor that we abandoned Athamas.....

–It is better than losing thousands of soldiers.

–You say that so easily.

Thor glared at the trembling lieutenant. However his expression soon eased up.

–Send this command to Mukah. And tell Star Gate command to link to the home planet. Mukah is to immediately start preparations to retreat.

-Understood.

The lieutenant saluted and exited the room. Thor continued glaring at the monitor. He should've won this war. But he was defeated. Thor had meticulously monitored the situation so he knew the reason why. He led the federation to victory. And the Rama army was defeated by one soldier! Fury ignited in Thor's eyes.

–Ark, I'll never forget today's disgrace!

While the situation in Athamas was being cleaned up. A mound of dirt in the forest started to shake. After a while, an arm stretched out through the dirt. And it was followed by another arm. The two arms then dragged the torso out of the dirt. It was like a scene of zombie rising from the grave!

–Ark, I'll never forget today's disgrace!

The person saying the same line as Thor was the Red Slaughterer.

While they were cursing Ark. Ark was.....

-The Rama's antenna has been destroyed!

<Bonus experience will be given to all federation soldiers who participated in the battle>

-Your level has risen!

-Your level has risen!

He gained a few levels. Of course the war on Athamas hadn't ended yet. The Rama's headquarters still remained.

-The Rama army has retreated from Athamas.

<If you destroy the Rama's headquarters then it is possible to get additional victory points to be converted to achievements>

Victory had already been decided. Destroying the Rama's headquarters was just to gain more experience! So Ark had no time to think about Thor or the Red Slaughterer.

"Come, let's go! Follow me, the hero of the federation!"

Ark sprinted across the battlefield carrying the federation flag.

That Man

Silver General Hospital.

One car entered the parking lot. The person at the steering wheel was Gwon Hwa-rang and next to him was his wife Park So-mi. Previously Park So-mi had returned from serving in Africa and collapsed. Her husband and Hyun-woo were frantic only to discover she was pregnant. Since then she had been under the care of Gwon Hwa-rang. Today she visited the hospital for a general check-up.

“What are you thinking about so intently?”

“Huh? Ah.....”

Gwon Hwa-rang said with a bemused expression. He looked around for a while before saying.

“What did you say?”

“I asked what you were thinking about so intently. What are you worried about?”

“My worries.....you don’t know? Am I the type of person to worry?”

“I know you’re not.”

Park So-mi laughed at his words.

“That’s why you didn’t hesitate for even a second to go to Africa.”

“Of course. Wherever you go is my home.”

“This time it is a civil war area. This time we’re going to have a child so you should think about it more.”

“I’ll do whatever you want to do.”

“But.....”

Park So-mi looked straight at Gwon Hwa-rang.

“As soon as we arrive in Africa, you contacts in the police and military are picking us up at the airport. And when we reach the civil war area, you’ll be teaching the troops martial arts. You don’t have to keep your worries a secret from me.”

“My worries.....

“I know. But I’ll never let you face it alone. Because you are the person I married. So I’m asking.”

Gwon Hwa-rang sighed at Park So-mi’s words.

“You’re not a person who easily expresses my worries. If you’re showing your worry then it must be something big. Isn’t it?”

“Uh.....”

Gwon Hwa-rang made an uneasy expression. Then Park So-mi laughed and nodded.

“Okay, you don’t have to say it. I believe in you and I’ll follow you to Africa. You must have a reason for not telling me. But please don’t worry too much. Because you will soon by the father of two children.”

Gwon Hwa-rang sighed. He had been troubled for a few days. His worry was related to Hyun-woo’s land in Taek Mountain. Gwon Hwa-rang intuitively noticed it when he met the rehabilitation members after returning to Korea. There was something hidden in the real estate slump. These days many people became public servants because it was difficult to find a stable job. But that wasn’t why Gwon Hwa-rang once worked as a detective. The reason he became a detective was justice! Therefore it was the most suitable job to achieve justice. That was the type of person Gwon Hwa-rang was. He couldn’t leave it alone once he smelt something rotten. Besides, the rehabilitation members were like brothers to his while Hyun-woo was his stepson. A father wouldn’t be able to pretend not to know.

“Look!”

Gwon Hwa-rang ordered in a cold rage. The rehabilitation members

started diligently gathering information. And a few days ago they handed the results back to Gwon Hwa-rang.

‘I guessed to some extent but.....’

The rehabilitation members had determined the actual owners of the Taek Mountain land. They were heavyweights in the local political or financial circles. This was the reason behind Gwon Hwa-rang’s worries. He was a man who wasn’t scared of the world. He was a man who didn’t hesitate to enter the office of gangsters when he was still a detective. There was no reason to flinch if the opponent was a local tycoon. Especially since the property belonged to Hyun-woo. No, money already wasn’t a problem for Hyun-woo these days.

In the process of examining the information received he discovered that many ordinary people suffered huge damage as well. It was to the extent that some who lost their entire savings tried to commit suicide. However, not one bit of this information was written in an article. Those behind this had the power to even silence the media. But that wasn’t the reason Gwon Hwa-rang hesitated. It was a fight for injustice. It doesn’t matter who the opponent was! Gwon Hwa-rang lived like this his entire life. Wasn’t this intolerance the reason why he left his home country to help in Africa?

.....But that was when he was just ‘one person.’ Now he had a wife and was going to be the father of two children. He knew from his many years as a detective. The people behind this had huge political or financial power. In some cases they could be even more cruel than crime syndicates. His fury wanted him to enter straight into the execution phase. The fortune that Hyun-woo gathered might be lost. But if he engaged too deeply then it was his pregnant wife and son who might suffer the damage. A pregnant wife and a son. That was Gwon Hwa-rang’s only weakness.

‘What should I do.....?’

“If you’re sure.....”

Then Park So-mi said.

“I know. I believe in you and will follow you. I’ll be here if you decide

to confide your worries.”

‘.....Amazing.’

A smile spread over Gwon Hwa-rang’s face. This was what she wanted to say.

“You don’t have to worry about such things. Aren’t you in the early stages of pregnancy?”

“I’m tougher than you think.”

“I know that. You wouldn’t have caught me if you weren’t. But no matter how strong you are, you still have to be careful because of the baby in your stomach.”

Gwon Hwa-rang said in a much light mood as he found a parking spot and prepared to get out of the car.

Kiiiiik!

Suddenly a car appeared and blocked the path in front of him. 3 people in suits got out and knocked on the car window.

“Gwon Hwa-rang ssi?”

“Honey, what is it? Do you know these people?”

“Lock the car door. I’ll see what is going on.”

Gwon Hwa-rang looked at the men before getting out.

“I am Gwon Hwa-rang. What can I do for you?”

“Someone wants to talk to you for a moment. Shall we go by our car?”

“I have business with my wife. If you have a request then give me a business card. I’ll contact them later.”

“It won’t take long.”

“I won’t say it again. Either leave or give me a business card.”

“You must not have understood my words.”

One of the men looked Gwon Hwa-rang straight in the eye and laid a hand on his shoulder. There was strength in the hand that grabbed his shoulder. The tone was polite but it was obviously a threat. However, he had been a detective for 20 years. He could guess who had sent these people. Judging by the exquisite timing, they were probably sent by someone behind the whole real estate problem. They had sent their minions. A guy like that dared to put his hand on Gwon Hwa-rang's shoulder. But he endured it. Because he was now the head of a family.

".....Okay, I'll listen to your words."

"Good choice."

The man grinned and nodded. He probably thought his threat had worked and he was delighted. Although he really wanted to punch the man in his face, Gwon Hwa-rang showed patient and went to the car. And when he was about to climb into the back seat. Another man started beating on the car window and shouting.

"Hey lady! Put down the phone. It won't be good if you start making noise for no reason."

He threatened Park So-mi who was holding a cell phone! The barely restrained heart snapped. A bloody aura entered Gwon Hwa-rang's eyes.

"You.....who did you just threaten?"

"What? Heok! T-this guy! What are you trying? Let me go!"

The man shouted and swung his fist as Gwon Hwa-rang grabbed his collar. But he couldn't do anything against Gwon Hwa-rang. Gwon Hwa-rang lowered his upper body to avoid the swing and approached the car. He smiled at Park So-mi inside the car and said.

"Close your eyes for a moment. The sight won't be good for the baby inside."

"Don't be too hard on them."

“It’s okay. This place is a hospital.”

Gwon Hwa-rang grinned and replied. His smile lasted until here. Once he was sure that his wife closed her eyes, he turned around with a face that looked like a predator. A low growl flowed through the mouth of the beast.

“You guys.....I need to teach you a lesson.”

“Ha! A guy like you.....cough!”

Gwon Hwa-rang narrowed the distance and grabbed the man’s throat.

“This is your job so you should be slightly strong? Now, here I go. Try not to bite your tongue!”

Spread following the exercises, such as renovating! Gwon Hwa-rang rushed towards the 2 men who looked confused. However, they soon recovered and ran forward at the same time. And.....

“Heok!”

“Cough!”

They flew in an arc and hit the ground. Gwon Hwa-rang breathed out and looked at the men scattered on the ground.

“I will leave it here today. If you don’t want to be beaten even more then quickly leave the business card and leave.”

Then there was a noise and another guy got out of the car. He was a short man in his 40s and wearing a leather jacket. He alternated looking at Gwon Hwa-rang and the men before muttering.

“Your spirit is overflowing for someone your age.”

“Are you calling me old?”

“As expected from a former detective.”

“Oh, you know I’m a former detective yet you still did something like this? I’ll let you know the difference between someone who wags their tail for the rich and someone who catches criminals.”

“I don’t know what’s so great about a former detective.”

The man smiled.

“I planned to just stop in for a greeting. You’re the one who started it. Those are nice words but I’ll make you understand in minutes. Why didn’t you just leave with us?”

“This is sincere advice. Change your career.”

“What a meddlesome old man.....”

The guy took off his leather jacket as he came up to Gwon Hwa-rang.

“I’m sorry but I need to save face in front of my subordinates.”

The man threw his leather jacket forward.

“You asshole!”

Gwon Hwa-rang struck the leather jacket and took a defensive posture. However the man had already reached him and his elbow headed towards Gwon Hwa-rang’s side. It was a bold and short attack that would pierce him in the vital spot! Anyone else would be floored and caught off guard. But Gwon Hwa-rang could tell with one glance. The other person might be short but he was familiar with fighting. It was the atmosphere of someone who could squash people if he was in the mood.

Ttak!

Gwon Hwa-rang stopped his elbow with his own elbow. He rotated his body while grabbing the guy’s collar with both hands. And he tried to bend forwards to smash the guy into the ground. However, the man bent his knee and pulled back the collar. He smiled and bent forward like he was leaning on Gwon Hwa-rang’s body. Then his elbow dropped towards Gwon Hwa-rang’s neck.

“Please understand. This is just a job.”

Snap!

There was a sharp sound.

“Father!”

Hyun-woo threw open the door of the hospital room and ran in. He had just exited the capsule to take a break from the game.

-Missed calls: 3. Text messages: 1

He had checked his phone out of habit and saw these messages.

“Eh? Mother called me? 3 times? Did something happen? Huk!”

Hyun-woo checked the message without any particular thoughts.

Your dad was caught in a fight and injured.

He rushed to the hospital as soon as he confirmed it. At first he wasn't worried about the injury. But then Hyun-woo started going crazy. He caught a taxi in sweatpants and sinister thoughts ran through his head as it headed to the hospital. His anxiety became many times larger as he couldn't connect to their phone. It was just like that time. When his father died and his mother started her long struggle with illness, he had been told of the accident through a text message and then the phone didn't connect.

‘If something happens to Father.....’

His imagination was going crazy.

‘Please! Please don't let it be anything serious!’

He prayed as he ran into the hospital.

“Can you tell me what room Gwon Hwa-rang and Park So-mi are staying in?”

“No. 1132.”

He found the room and immediately opened the door.

“Eh? Why are you here?”

Gwon Hwa-rang stared at Hyun-woo with surprised eyes. Contrary to his worries, Gwon Hwa-rang was sitting on the bed with a

perfectly fine appearance. There was a big bandage on his forehead but he couldn't consider it life threatening at all. Hyun-woo calmed his head and went over to Gwon Hwa-rang.

"What's going on? Don't you know how worried I was?"

"Worried? Why?"

"You're asking why? I received a message that Father was injured!"

"Ah, your mother contacted you. I told her that wasn't necessary....."

Gwon Hwa-rang laughed and scratched his head.

"That's the great thing about marriage. I have a son who will come running if I get hurt."

"You're joking right now? Why didn't you pick up my call?"

"Call? I left it with your mother. You know. We only have one cell phone."

"Mother? Why did you leave it with Mother?"

"Today is the day of her regular check-up. So I borrowed the room. You know that your mother is slightly old to be pregnant right? She needs to take many early pregnancy tests so we have the room."

"So nothing's wrong with both of you?"

"No."

Hyun-woo sat down on the bed.

"But what on earth happened? Why is your forehead hurt?"

"It's not a big deal. I just had a small quarrel in the parking lot."

"Quarrel? Someone hit you?"

"What a imagination. Who do you think I am? There was a little bump during the struggle. My forehead hit his nose. Very lightly."

Initially Hyun-woo didn't understand what he was saying. But he

imagined the scene of the forehead hitting the nose and could understand the situation.

“Don’t tell me you head-butted him?”

“Eh? There was a name for it? I thought I was the first one to develop the technique. Too bad. I thought of a nice name for it.”

“Oh my god! Are you joking right now?”

“What do you think?”

“Didn’t he know who Father is? You’re a person who can catch a bear with your bare hands. His nose must be quite hard to damage your forehead to the extent that you have to place a bandage on it. Was Father attacked by some young delinquent? Why did this incident occur? What happened? Is the person going to sue you for this?”

“You don’t need to worry about that.”

Gwon Hwa-rang answered without even having to think about it.

“Your mother recorded the scene on her cell phone.”

This was the reason why Park So-mi was holding her phone. Park So-mi hadn’t been worried about Gwon Hwa-rang getting hurt. It was actually the opposite. She was worried Gwon Hwa-rang would injure them so badly they would need to spend 18 weeks in hospital. Therefore she took out her phone just in case!

“This is the trust between a couple.”

Well, he didn’t know if it could be called trust.....

“Mother is unbelievably strong.”

Hyun-woo muttered with an astounded expression.

“However I should meet with the victim. You encountered them in the parking lot so are they also in hospital?”

“That’s not necessary. Those guys wouldn’t sue even if your mother hadn’t taken the video. Did you think I would do things without

thinking? I had my own ideas. Even if some of them died, those guys would never dare sue me.”

“Those guys?”

Hyun-woo asked with a frown and Gwon Hwa-rang flinched.

“It wasn’t just a random quarrel. Isn’t that right?”

“No, that.....”

“Father.”

Hyun-woo said in a low voice. Then Gwon Hwa-rang sighed and said.

“Yes, I didn’t really talk to them but I could guess who sent them. They probably figured out I was the one investigating them.”

“Father knows those people?”

“They are the original owners of the Taek Mountain land.”

“Father, why did you do this? I said I would take care of it.”

“I didn’t want you to handle all of it.”

“This isn’t a job for Father.”

“I wanted to.”

Gwon Hwa-rang said with a firm expression.

“The problem isn’t as simple as you think. Some powerful political and business people are involved. I only determined this today. That’s why they tried to threaten me. My son’s assets is invested in that property so how can I pretend not to know?”

“But.....”

Hyun-woo sighed with frustration. Just thinking of the Taek real estate was enough to make his heart jump in anger. However Hyun-woo was silent despite Gwon Hwa-rang’s words. This was because he knew it far too well. Lucifer threatened Korea’s government with a nuclear power plant. That plant was located next to the Taek

Mountain therefore the powerful figures wanted to capitalize on the situation and it became like this. In fact, Hyun-woo had been furious the first time he figured it out. The only ones fighting against Lucifer's threat was Hyun-woo and some famous gamers. The Emergency Planning department said it was a secret so he never mentioned one word about it. However they obviously gave those guys the information. He wanted to visit the Emergency Planning department and question them closely.

However there was no evidence. And it didn't matter even if there was evidence. Hyun-woo couldn't make them take back the land that was sold or the land sold to Hyun-woo. Especially considering the fact that they were powerful figures. Of course he hadn't abandoned hope.

'The real estate prices plunged because of the possibility of a nuclear explosion. In other words, if the explosion is definitely stopped then the price might go up again. No, it might rise even more than before.'

In order to prevent the explosion, he needed to win against Lucifer. If he won then it was a jackpot. But Hyun-woo had confidence inside the game. At first he didn't know what Lucifer looked like in the game. But now he had found Lucifer. He even managed to win against him using various methods. That was all thanks to Hyun-woo himself.

'I won against the opponent. There is no guarantee I will win twice. That Lucifer bastard, it was a mistake to hold the Taek Mountain hostage and provoke me. If I win against Lucifer then the real estate price will double, no triple what I invested in it! And I'll make the guys who sold the land regret it.'

That was how Hyun-woo would get revenge. But Gwon Hwa-rang unexpectedly cut in and made it dangerous. Yet he couldn't confess the entire situation to Gwon Hwa-rang. The real estate problem being caused by Lucifer was only Hyun-woo's guess. There was no evidence. No, there was a separate reason apart from Lucifer for the prices plunging. It was the VIPs who sold the real estate. That's why he wanted to stop Gwon Hwa-rang. Hyun-woo worried for a

while before pulling out his trump card.

“I understand how Father feels. But if those people are involved then it will be dangerous. There is no guarantee what happened today won’t occur again. I wouldn’t worry if it was Father alone but what about Mother? Mother is pregnant right now. What if something happens to my sibling?”

“I was also worried about that.”

Gwon Hwa-rang nodded with a serious face. He scratched his head before laughing.

“So I found another way.”

“Another way?”

“It is me. Hey!”

Ppak-!

Someone suddenly smacked him in the back of the head. That eerie voice penetrated straight into his brain! The one who smacked him was a man 180 cm tall. Hyun-woo knew of only one person like that.

“Myung-ryong hyung?”

“You still have more to learn. You have no manners. I’m the person who generously bestowed that body to you yet you don’t come see me anymore once you become part of a large company?”

The man who entered was Lee Myung-ryong. He was the one who taught Hyun-woo taekwondo and he was a part of the police agency’s cyber investigation team. His philosophy was ‘become stronger even if you’re broken.’ Lee Myung-ryong had enthusiastically showed Hyun-woo this philosophy by beating him day and night.

“W-why is Myung-ryong hyung here?”

“I called him.”

It was Gwon Hwa-rang who replied. Then Lee Myung-ryong flopped down opposite him. He looked at the bandage on Gwon Hwa-rang’s

head and laughed.

“Kukukukuk. It really is a spectacle. Hyung-nim is losing his touch. Being hit by some neighbourhood thugs. The police agency would cry.”

“Who will cry? And I wasn’t hit! This is the side effect of a special move.”

“That doesn’t matter. Originally, couldn’t you beat the opponent without bleeding? No, tell me what happened. I heard an overview of the situation on the phone. What do you want from me?”

“I want to employ you as a madam.”

“Madame? Do you want me to get a gender reassignment surgery? That’s too much even for Hyung-nim.”

“Stop talking nonsense.”

Gwon Hwa-rang laughed and continued.

“I explained things on the phone. Like today has shown, this situation could become very dangerous. Well now I have a disguise.”

“A disguise? I’m not going to marry you.”

“That’s not it.”

“Then what do you want me to do? Should I just leave?”

“You really are talking nonsense. Anyway, it is dangerous so what I need is a disguise. The guys waiting in the parking lot was like a warning. If I continued digging then my family won’t be left alone.”

“Those guys often use methods like that.”

“Yes, that’s why I want to employ you as a front. I was given a warning but they might not notice a police officer digging.”

“Aha!”

Lee Myung-ryong tapped his finger and nodded.

“So Hyung-nim called me so that I can be cannon fodder for you?”

“Why, you don’t want to?”

“What did you just say?”

Lee Myung-ryong stood up and shouted. He frowned at Gwon Hwarang before laughing.

“Wasn’t I just thinking about how bored I was these days? I came quite quickly when you called. Okay. I’ll take over this problem.”

A sigh flowed from Hyun-woo’s mouth. A difficult man to deal with had appeared.

Sector S-20

“Hah.....”

Ark couldn't bear it. He was anxious about Gwon Hwa-rang involving himself in the real estate problem.

‘Should I have confessed about Lucifer from the beginning?’

He had that thought. However Gwon Hwa-rang wouldn't back off even if he knew the circumstances. Gwon Hwa-rang was already involved in the issue. He wanted the people who used their position to create victims of the real estate scam to be held accountable. Ark didn't know what Gwon Hwa-rang would do if he found out that Lucifer was threatening people with the nuclear power plant.

–The country is in a crisis situation yet those VIP people are using their position to trick the common people into a corner! Unforgivable! I'll expose their work and deliver justice!

It would be like pouring oil on the fire! In fact, Ark originally had the same thoughts as well. But it wasn't very realistic. The parking lot incident occurred not even two months after Gwon Hwa-rang returned to Korea. While Ark's feelings were cheering Gwon Hwa-rang on, realistically he didn't want him to go against those powerful people. The situation could also get worse at any time. But not just yet.

‘This is a complicated situation. Father has interfered so I should be more cautious. I'll trust it to Myung-ryong hyung at the moment and will just watch.’

Ark organized his thoughts for the moment. But there was no guarantee the 3rd party would back off. Ark could fight in a separate manner from Gwon Hwa-rang and Lee Myung-ryong. That was his confrontation with Lucifer!

‘The real estate of the Taek Mountain is in a slump because Lucifer

is controlling the nuclear power plant. If the threat disappears then the real estate prices will soar again. Then the problem of the common people will be resolved. Then I'll make those people regret selling the land and threatening Father.'

If he won the confrontation then all the problems would be settled. And he had already started. He had won 1 skirmish with Lucifer. Of course, the war would only be won if he reached the ultimate goal before Lucifer. This victory might not be that significant but it boosted his confidence.

'I can do it! I just have to be more determined!'

.....That's what he thought.....

"This is a video from Athamas."

Marquis Martin showed him a video after the battle ended and he returned. The video showed a Rama warrior wielding a red lightsaber. His identity could be determined as soon as he saw the appearance.

"The Red Slaughterer?"

"Yes, this video was taken shortly after the destruction of the antenna base and the federation army was in the midst of attacking the Rama headquarters. In other words, it is after you claimed to defeat the Red Slaughterer. Considering the Red Slaughterer's level, it is impossible that he revived using the Fairy."

The higher level a pioneer was, the more time it would take to revive with the Fairy. The Red Slaughterer was over level 100 so a minimum of 2 days was required for resurrection. Yet the allied federation and Aschulat troops had attacked the Rama headquarters when less than 24 hours had passed.

"In other words, the Red Slaughterer wasn't killed in battle with you. And that guy escaped through the Star Gate before the Rama headquarters was destroyed."

'I certainly didn't confirm that he died.....'

Ark had thrown a grenade into a trap and buried him. If he survived in those circumstances then he was like a zombie. He realized once again that Lucifer, the Red Slaughterer wasn't an easy opponent. But he hadn't expected that his war with Lucifer would end with this confrontation. And overall it was Ark's victory! And he received compensation for that victory!

Character Information Window			
Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	94
Species	Human	Occupation	Elim's Heir
Fame	8,520	Adventure	1,120
Health	2,500 (+90)	Mental Power	1,500 (+340)
Mana	65	Force	260
Strength	240 (+38)	Agility	305 (+41)
Stamina	385 (+18)	Wisdom	40 (+13)
Intelligence	230 (+68)	Luck	55 (+8)
* Title			
Cleaning Foreman (Agility + 3)			
Ignorant Destroyer (Wisdom -10, Strength +7, Stamina +7)			
Beltana's Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +3)			
Athamas' Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +5)			
Mediator (Wisdom, Intelligence +15)			
* Contribution: Galactic Federation 11,850, Aschulat 500			
* Affiliation: Dark Eden (CEO)			
*Body Coating: Survivor			
+ Environmental adaptation increases by 50% due to the Survivor coating.			
+ The Survivor coating reduces the drop rate of Satiety by 30%.			
+ The Survivor coating will reduce fall damage by 50%.			
+The 'Clairvoyance' effect of the Survivor coating is applied.			

Level was the first thing he checked! Ark had played a core role in the federation's victory so he had received bonus experience and gained 9 levels. But there was even more.

-You have received the <Athamas' Hero> title from the Galactic Federation.
--

This title is given to the user who participated in the war on the disputed planet and gains the most achievements. Therefore it is a unique title due to the different names of the disputed planets. Only one person can receive this title so it is different from the general titles.

The user who receives a title with the name of a disputed planet would be given huge compensation from the galactic federation. You will be given priority in investing on Athamas when development starts. You will also receive preferential treatment compared to the average citizen.

<Title Effect: Athamas' Hero (All stats +5)>

- + 2,000 additional fame. + Galactic Federation contribution +5,000
- + Acquired 400 Adventure points
- + Acquired 3% investment stake in Athamas that has become the property of the galactic federation.

A new hero title! His fame and contribution rose significantly while all stats earned +5 points. However there was a difficult part involved with that. A hero's duty. It was becoming the federation's promotional billboard. Ark had no intention of being dragged around like before. On Beltana he had made a secret deal with Marquis Martin so he had no margin to argue. Of course, fame was useful in many ways. It helped maintain a good impression with the NPC. Fame could also help prevent make unnecessary enemies. Ark already had a powerful enemy called Lucifer so it was best to avoid any new ones. So he made a suggestion.

"Can you give that role to someone else?"

"Someone else?"

"I'm talking about Slayer, Leon and Melina who earned some large achievements. I received the Hero title but it wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for them. You know better than anyone that a hero can't win a war by themselves. It is soldiers fighting in unison. If the hero receives the entire spotlight then wouldn't the morale of other

soldiers fall? I've already been exposed to the mass media so wouldn't using other warriors have more effect?"

It was an annoying task for Ark. But his suggestion was quite persuasive.

"If I reuse the same person then the effect would definitely drop."

If herbal medicine was used too many times then the effect would lessen.....

"Okay. This time I will use them."

Marquis Martin nodded.

"Really?"

"I'll do it! I'll do it!"

Slayer and Leon welcomed it with open arms. In fact, that was how most users would react.

"We'll finally get to be celebrities. As expected, it is good that I came along with Ark-nim! Huhuhu, now we will be popular!"

Leon and Slayer were celebrating because of the bonuses that came with being a celebrity. They expected that they could use their brilliant background to attract the interest of female users. Well, it was consistent with their personality.

"Doesn't that mean Ark-nim is going to leave now?"

Unlike Slayer and Leon, Melina wasn't that excited. However Ark had no intention of parting with Slayer, Leon and Melina here. There were numerous users in the game but it wasn't easy to meet reliable ones. And they were the most reliable users he had met so far. Maintaining the relationship with these users was also important.

"We can meet again any time if necessary."

Ark exchanged ID codes with Slayer, Leon and Melina. The clean-up after the battle.....wasn't over yet. There was still the most important thing. The title was just a perk he obtained for his active role. He still needed to receive the quest reward from Marquis

Martin. This was the reason he was waiting in Tatuine after leaving Athamas.

“Was the problem dealt with?”

“I guess.”

Marquis Martin nodded.

“Jyubel is in charge of the Department of Domestic Affairs so it was slightly difficult. But his Majesty the Emperor also showed an interest thanks to your achievements so that guy couldn’t say no.”

“So now.....”

“I finished the process a short while ago.”

Marquis Martin said as he handed over a memory chip.

“The debt between us is cleaned up with this. I don’t know why you’re interested in a place like that but here you go. I wish you well. Now, is there anything else I can help you with? Or will you return there immediately?”

“I’ll go there.”

“Then I’ll lend you my personal airship. This is compensation for the delay in the processing.”

Ark had no intention of rejecting it.

“Thank you.”

Ark headed towards the airfield where the Royal Guards were gathered. The Royal Guards had returned the rental equipment after arriving in Tatuine and now looked like their previous selves. But Ark wasn’t disappointed. Ark wandered for a while before finding the target and the Royal Guards was only starting now.

“Hyung-nim, what will we do now?”

“Surely we’re not going back to the Silver Hand again?”

The members asked with uneasy expressions. They had to give to

the Silver Hand to repay the money the Silver Hand lent Ark. They had spent a month and a half with the Silver Hand and they still hadn't repaid the money. The Royal Guards were also aware of this and was concerned they would be sent back to the Silver Hand. However Ark had already paid back the debt out of his own pocket. This was because he judged that further training wasn't required.

"You guys will be coming with me."

"To where?"

"You'll see."

Ark smiled and replied. And the place Ark headed to on Marquis Martin's airship was.....

No, before that!

"Don't touch any of the food or drinks on this airship!"

Da da da da!

Hegel sprinted forward. Once he arrived at a distance place, he spread his arms and shouted.

"Pant pant pant! Hyung-nim, here too?"

Ark silently nodded. Then Hegel ran a few hundred metres in the opposite direction and shouted again.

"Pant pant pant! Hyung-nim! Hyung-nim! Here too?"

Ark once again nodded and smiled. This situation repeated a few times. Hegel ran around gasping and asking the same question while Ark nodded without any annoyance. Once he had done this a dozen times, Hegel ran back with tears in his eyes.

"Hyung-nim, really? It's not a joke? Yes? This is really our land?"

"Yes, it is our land."

Ark replied while patting Hegel's head. A large wasteland stretched in front of him with a mountain located in its centre. This was Mt. Fargo, the dormant volcano. The reward Ark claimed from Marquis Martin for the <Athamas' Battlefield!> quest was Mt. Fargo.

"You want to have Mt. Fargo?"

This happened a few days ago when Ark was flying to Tatuine on the airship. Marquis Martin frowned and said.

"You seem to be misunderstanding something. Mt. Fargo doesn't belong to me. Strictly speaking, Istana doesn't even belong to the federation. I don't have the right to give you this land."

"I know."

Then why did you say that?"

"Mt Fargo doesn't belong to the galactic federation but what about the different sectors?"

"Are you talking about splitting that area into sectors?"

"That's right."

Ark said with a smile. The reason he thought of this reward.....

'The fight with Lucifer won't simply be decided with a 1 on 1 fight. Something larger was required to meet the ultimate goal. Then there would be limits on my power alone. I need the strength of an organization behind me.'

This was one of the reasons why Ark hurried to register as an agent. Luckily he was able to register as an agent in Charem. However, the agent registration wasn't his goal. It had no meaning if he didn't grow it properly. Of course Ark's interest was in growing the agent.

The first step was to secure a base.

An organization required robust roots in order to grow. And the foundation of any organization is a base.' Ark had intended to use Charem as a base. He managed to become an agent for 18,900

gold, he also had a 3% share and the Charenjok's food manufacturing factor was nearby. It was also a special autonomous trade city so the growth possibilities were endless. That idea changed once he found the Elim Sanctuary. He had obtained the occupation Elim's Heir from there. Ark needed to focus on growth and obtaining Xanax's legacy. Therefore he needed to make his base at Mt. Fargo where the Elim Sanctuary was located. Of course, this wasn't the only reason to pick Mt. Fargo. There was a hunting ground situation inside Mt. Fargo. He could earn income from the gallstones and grow the Royal Guards at the same time.

'This place is perfect as a base.'

And there was no apparent difficulty. Mt. Fargo was located in the Outlands. Istana basically belonged to the federation but they had no reach over the Outlands. Therefore a user was free to make it a base.

'But.....'

That was the problem. The federation isn't involved in anything that happens in the Outlands. Therefore establishing a base is free but it won't be protected by the federation's laws. Of course, if someone killed a user or NPC in the Outlands then they would become chaotic. But unlike a city, the chaotic value accumulated was low and they would just need to pay a small bail. This was the reason why PKing was prevalent in the Outlands.

Outlands= lawless.

Building a stronghold in this place was dangerous. Even if he painstakingly developed the building, its rights wouldn't be formally acknowledged. So he had no way to stop large guilds from forcibly crushing it. That was the reason why Director Bain needed to request help from the Laius headquarters when the Kero clan attacked. The federation troops couldn't get involved in incidents in the Outlands. There was only one way to prevent such a situation!

'A sector!'

The only thing the federation could manage in the Outlands was a

sector. The same laws as a federation city also applied to the sector. The federation troops could help out in a raid.

‘An unsafe base will only be a burden. If he wanted to establish a stronghold in Mt. Fargo then it was necessary to make a sector. And it will be good if I’m registered as the administrator of the sector.’

This was the conclusion Ark came to. Of course, that task wasn’t as easy as it seemed. The user had to have a business to apply for a sector. It also required the appropriate fame and federation contribution. This was the minimum conditions required to apply for a sector! Marquis Martin looked frustrated and said.

“But that is literally the smallest condition. In order for a sector to be formally recognized, the area needs to have a minimum population and you need to apply to be qualified as an administrator. Once all those criteria are met, you need to pass an exam at the Department of Domestic Affairs.”

“Isn’t that why I asked Marquis Martin?”

“You think I can do something like this?”

“Yes, that is what I think.”

Ark replied with a serious expression. Marquis Martin sent Ark a sour look before finally nodding.

“Okay. If you succeed on Athamas then I’ll take care of it.”

That was the behind the scenes deal Ark made over Athamas. And Ark did his part. Somehow Marquis Martin had also achieved his promise. Ark didn’t care how he persuaded Jyubel who was in charge of Domestic Affairs. That important thing was that Marquis Martin had registered Mt. Fargo as a sector and Ark was the administrator. That was the contents of the memory chip given to Ark before leaving.

-You have become the administrator of a new sector!

Sector code: S-20 Sector rating: Lv. 1
--

Sector range: 1 km area around Mt. Fargo.

Sector manager: Ark (Agent- Dark Eden)

* You have become the administrator of a sector and was granted the right to uphold the laws of the federation in this area. You can receive taxes from pioneers and merchants who visit the sector. However, you have to pay the federation 50% of the tax money as a public utility fee. In return the sector will be protected from all threats.

The administrator of the new sector S-20! This was founded on Ark's achievements in Athamas.

"I never thought this day would come!"

"You were a criminal sent to the battlefield and now you're a sector manager!"

"I'll have no regrets even if I die now!"

The members looked around with eyes full of tears. They were beyond impressed. They used to suffer from hunger on Beltana and now they were the subordinates of a sector manager. Ark also felt a deep emotion with looking at the area around Mt. Fargo that he was in charge of. He had finally gained a piece of land in Galaxian!

"It is thanks to your suffering."

"Ugh! Hyung-nim!"

Tears finally fell from the eyes of the members. However Ark wasn't entirely pleased. It was a small scale town when Ark came here for the first time. However many of the merchants' trailers were abandoned after the Kero's raid. The Laius' research centre on the slope of Mt. Fargo was also smashed by the landslide. The debris was just left around Mt. Fargo so it was no different from a ruin. The caves inside the mountain had also collapsed so users couldn't hunt. The merchants also all went away. It hadn't been designated as a formal sector when the attack happened. It was natural that everyone would desert it and it would become a ghost town.

'Now it is time to fight!'

Ark started the sector reconstruction project. This was the first step he had to do after registering it as a formal sector. However, he used his remaining funds to clear the Royal Guard's debts with the Silver Hand so he was penniless. No funds meant he couldn't build anything.....

-Sector S-20 Administration Manager: Ark

This was the information on a signpost.

"Hyung-nim, it is okay to cry."

While the members were thrilled, he was sighing in front of the signpost. But it couldn't be helped. He had no money!

"It might be disappointing but this is our reality. As you can see, a formal sector was registered but this is the middle of nowhere. How it changes will depend on us. We need to pour our blood and sweat into this land. We have to transform this sector into the largest and most thriving sector in Istana. Of course things won't be that easy. But I believe in us. Working together nothing is impossible."

"We believe in Hyung-nim!"

"I'll do whatever you say! Anything!"

"What do we need to do?"

He had waited for those words.

"This!"

Ark took out a shovel. An entrance fee from pioneers was the basic income for a sector. If he added many inns and shops then he could get additional income. In the Outlands, pioneers needed a Fairy the most so he could also obtain money from that. Therefore the necessary thing for his sector's growth was to secure pioneers! But the caves inside Mt. Fargo were blocked by the landslide. It was necessary to create the caves in order to return the sector to its original state. Then he needed to do one thing.

Dig!

Of course he wasn't going to do it alone. Ark had used his remaining money to purchase 11 shovels in Tatuine. Milan distributed the shovels to the other members of the Royal Guards and Ark started the digging training.

"Everyone grab one and follow me!"

Ark led the members to dig in Mt. Fargo.

And.....Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

Ark, Milan and the Royal Guards. The 12 of them started shovelling. Once again, the Royal Guards had shed tears because they weren't required to receive the Silver Hand's hell training anymore. Yet those tears dried up after not even one day in S-20. Instead sweat started pouring out!

"Pant pant pant! Pant pant pant!"

All of them were breathing heavily. Ark was the only normal one. Still, this was better than receiving the Silver Hand's hell training. Their training was so tough they felt like they were always going to die. But they could take breaks with Ark. Ark ate breakfast, connected to the game, dug, ate lunch, dug, dinner, dug, dug, dug until he fell asleep! But he couldn't complain. Because Ark had a reason for doing it.

"This is our land. We need to save this place with our own hands. You guys have to dig, dig, dig. Every drop of sweat will fertilize S-20! Now, follow me!"

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

And the shovelling started again. How could the subordinates not obey a boss who was working hard? Even if the Royal Guards' backs were throbbing with pain, they couldn't stop shovelling. No, if it was just shovelling then they could withstand it. Mt. Fargo's caves were teeming with Thanatos! They had to shovel as well as take care of the Thanatos when they came flocking. The members also needed to deal with the Thanatos. The members became battered

by the Thanatos every time they penetrated a blocked cave. Then they had to start shovelling again!

‘W-what is this?’

‘I thought I finally escaped from the Silver Hand.....’

‘Oh my god! That was 100 times better!’

The members became like zombies after the situation continued for a few days. But the members had some hope. The caves where they were digging weren’t that big. The cave had a round form and was only 5 km large. After 5 days had passed, they were able to clear out all the dirt and sand and opened the cave to traffic.

“W-we did it!”

“The cave is finally in its original state!”

The members who hadn’t seen sunlight for 5 days cheered. However Milan’s expression didn’t change. Milan knew the structure of the caves inside Mt. Fargo. The cave the members took 5 days to clear was just the upper layer. The intermediate layer was many times larger and he couldn’t even grasp the size of the bottom layer. And considering Ark’s nature.....

“Now. Let’s go down to a lower layer!”

Of course he wouldn’t give a break. The Royal Guards finally started to realize it. Meeting Ark again had been their dream. The happy start they imagined soon turned to misery. They had moved from hell to an even worse place! The members would actually rather receive the training from the Silver Hand. But it was too late for regrets. The Royal Guards had no choice but to continue digging.

<p>-Mellin has learnt the <Dig> skill.</p> <p>-Hegel has learnt the <Dig> skill.....</p>
--

The only consolation was the ever increasing skill. And that was also Ark’s happiness.

‘Huhuhu. This is a pretty good?’

The members were going to help Ark fight Lucifer. Ark had been quite nervous about not seeing the members’ growth. That’s why he came up with the training schedule that he gave to the Silver Hand. He had also confirmed their fundamentals on Athamas.

‘My efforts on building the foundation for stamina is starting to show an effect. It has been demonstrated that the Royal Guards are still too low levelled to compete with Lucifer’s subordinates. Now I need to focus on raising their levels.’

That was his thoughts after the fight on Athamas. But right now it was imperative to rebuild the sector. Then the Thanatos showed up every time they penetrated a cave. Ark was glad about being able to do reconstruction work as well as level up. Of course this was incidental. Right now the urgent issue was to restore the sector. S-20 had to develop beyond what it was before. And he had finally cleared the upper layer dungeon.

“Soon I will receive guests.”

He was ready to bring back the pioneers. And the promotion of the newly opened S-20 was already in progress.

Istana’s central city of Tatuine.

Two men and one lady appeared on a large screen attached to a building. The two men and one lady smiled perkily despite looking like they had no rest. They were Slayer, Leon and Melina who were playing Ark’s promotional role. Leon and Slayer thought they could be famous like Ark.

–I heard that you played a decisive role in leading our forces to victory on Athamas?

–No, that....it is something I wanted to do as a citizen of the federation.

–You’re too humble.

–Doesn't a rice plant ripen better when it lowers its head? Hat hat hat!

The big screen zoomed in on Slayer laughing like a frog. Then the users watching the screen gave it unpleasant looks.

“What? That guy?”

“He’s unbelievably smug after receiving some achievements.”

.....He gained a lot of anti-fans every time he appeared on the screen. However this shameful conduct by Slayer and Leon led to an unexpected effect.

“Sheesh, I can’t believe those guys became heroes.”

“Okay. We should lend our support to Bellin’s battlefield!”

“If those guys could gain attention than the Rama must not be a big deal.”

They started becoming dismissive of the Rama. Therefore the number of pioneers volunteering to go to the battlefield steadily increased. That wasn’t the only effect of Slayer and Leon’s advertising.

“I thought Ark was annoying when he appeared on TV.....”

“That’s right, now I actually prefer the blunt Ark. He is better than these smug guys.”

“Those bastards, they should stop promoting at once!”

“Okay, killing Ark is cancelled. Now they are out targets!”

Ark’s anti-fans transferred their attentions to Slayer and Leon. It was an excellent choice picking Slayer and Leon as his promotional billboard. But those were both unexpected effects. Other than his anti-fans switching targets, Ark had a reason for selecting Leon and Slayer as the billboard. That condition was.....

–Did you have any last words you wanted to say?

–Well, no.....

Slayer and Leon scratched their heads.

Then the silent Melina had quickly jumped in.

–Wait a minute. I wanted to let the people seeing the broadcast know something.

–What is it?

–We were able to build up the achievements thanks to Ark-nim who has received the title of Hero. We got the chance to go to Athamas after accidentally meeting Ark-nim at Mt. Fargo. It received a surprise attack by space pirates and is in ruins. However Ark-nim is currently reconstructing the sector. The probability of monsters dropping gallstones in the dungeon is quite high so it will be useful for any users looking to upgrade their equipment.

This was the condition attached. The promotion of Ark's sector S-20! Ark had already played the role of the federation's billboard. He knew how quickly things could spread if promoted properly. The effectiveness of S-20's promotion was more than he imagined! Pioneers were attracted to S-20 thanks to Ark's advertising strategy. And the advertising strategy was definitely effective. Users interested in gallstones headed to S-20 from close cities like Tatuine as well as faraway cities like Sidellin. Among those users was 'him.'

"Ark!"

The blond youth looked up at the screen with complicated eyes. He had received a special pardon for the war on Athamas and was nicknamed Rapid.

".....I finally know where Ark is."

A corner of his mouth went up. He had been completely disappointed on Athamas. He couldn't understand why Ark had been defeated so easily by the Red Slaughterer. He felt like he lost the feeling that was sustaining him. However he learnt after the battle that it wasn't the real Ark. Ark also played a decisive role in the victory on Athamas.

"Yes, I knew it. It is worthwhile looking for you."

His enthusiasm was revived. After returning to Istana, he figured out Ark's location through Slayer, Leon and Melina's broadcast. The end of his long journey was finally nearing. He still couldn't clearly explain why he wanted to see Ark. He didn't know what he wanted to say. But he didn't worry about that issue anymore.

"I'll discover it when I meet Ark."

All the answers would be released from Ark himself. And soon he would meet Ark!

Visitors

“It is good that I received S-20.”

He had worried about it for a while. He gave up all the other compensation for the <Athamas' Battlefield!> quest in order to receive the sector. But it felt extremely difficult after he first arrived at S-20. A landslide had occurred on the mountain and only wreckage was left. Ark lost all his energy. After the space pirates attacked, he had gone away with Marquis Martin straight away so he couldn't see the result.

‘Is it useless?’

He didn't express it to the members but he was worried about this. However he had already obtained it. And the value of the gallstones inside the dungeon was high enough that he thought it was worth a try. Thus Ark launched the reconstruction work! He mobilized the Royal Guards to dig up and clear out dirt in the upper layer of the cave.

“Excuse me.”

The first visitors appeared in S-20. No, it wasn't precisely their first visit.

“It really is Ark.”

“I wanted to look since I heard that Ark-nim came back.”

It was Shein, Kuma, Face etc. They were the users who assisted Ark when the Kero clan attacked. They had left for another hunting ground after Mt. Fargo became blocked but came back after hearing that Ark was making a sector here.

“I heard that you're opening up Mt. Fargo's dungeon again.....”

“Yes, I'm still working on the middle layer but the upper layer has been completely opened.”

“Ohh, is that true?”

“I felt uncomfortable because I couldn’t finish gathering gallstones the other day. Now we can hunt in this sector again. Oh, this is now a sector so I had to pay a fee to use it.”

This was the first income opportunity for S-20! But Ark gracefully shook his head.

“That’s okay. We are fellow soldiers who fought the space pirates together. This might be a sector but how can I charge you money? Don’t pay any attention to the fee. I’m the administrator for S-20 so use it freely.”

“But this won’t be feasible for your livelihood.....”

Kuma said as he looked at one of the signposts erected. However Ark shook his head without any hesitation.

“It is sufficient that I met you again.”

That perspective.....the Royal Guards had shed a lot of blood clearing the middle layer of the cave and killing the Thanatos. They had been digging at the dungeon for one week! However Ark had his own ideas. The basic source of revenue for a sector was the admission fee from visitors. The fee was to allow people a place to rest from the monsters of the Outlands. But that was only when it was properly equipped with amenities. A sector needed a terminal for airships, a Fairy to register at and shops selling various goods. Pioneers paid the entrance fee for a sector in order to take advantage of such facilities. However S-20 was in the middle of nowhere.

-Sector S-20 Administration
Manager: Ark

That was the only signpost in the sector. Of course S-20 had the gallstones from the dungeon. The dungeon had been covered up from the landslide so they had to use 100% manual digging to clear it. It was natural to receive a fee for such efforts. But Ark had a

different opinion. Ark hadn't waived the fee for them because they were acquaintances. The regular users not familiar with Ark would no doubt complain. In the early days of a business, he had to be the most careful about any complaints.

-This sector is a dud. I wasted money paying the fee!

Rumours were the biggest obstacle for the growth of a sector!

'A business isn't built in one or two days. Right now reputation is most important!'

Reputation gathered people. Money would be collected at the place where people gathered. Ark already knew how to conduct business from New World. And that part was a little clearer in Galaxian. The fee for using the sector was the basic income but 90% of the real earnings came from the port fees, Fairy fees or taxes from the proceeds of the store. However, he couldn't create port or Fairy without money. The Fairy and port was a public facility. It was impossible to establish a transport ship route or Fairy when there were no people. The sector needed to reach a certain level before permits would be given. It was the same with the stores. No NPC merchants would build stores in a sector with no visitors. The most important thing for a new sector was to gather pioneers! He couldn't be too greedy over petty cash. Ark's approach was effective.

"Thank you."

"But we heard Ark-nim was setting up this sector so we came to help. If you don't want a use fee then please let us do something else."

"Yes, I will do whatever."

"I know a lot of users so I'll call my friends."

Ark didn't refuse it again.

"Thank you very much."

In fact, S-20 had a lot of unexpected work to do. One of them was to create a boundary fence around the sector to prevent monsters

and bandits. An average sector also installed a shield generator on the fence. Naturally Ark had no money to create such a fence.

‘But it won’t be that much with the materials.’

Ark laughed as he looked at the pile of debris on one side. They were the previous stores that had been broken by the Kero’s attack! They packed their money after the battle ended by the junk was left there. Therefore there was a pile of junk stacked up. There was also the wreckage of the abandoned Laius research centre.

‘The crew is in the dungeon so I’m lacking in manpower.....’

Now he had dozens of volunteers. Therefore Ark was able to launch construction work on the fence. Of course, they were customers so he couldn’t work them as hard as the Royal Guards. But Ark was a user who had the ability to draw out more effort from people.

“Pant pant pant! Isn’t this pretty hard?”

“Then you may stop soon. Fortunately you and your colleagues made 300 metres last night so you’ve progressed quite a lot. Aren’t you really good at this? Your party members have worked around the clock without any complaints. This shows that they trust their leader. They must be working hard because they know your character.”

Just throwing in a few words like this.....

“Eh? What is it? You can stop now.”

“Pant pant pant! I-it’s fine. After I thought about it, I realized I don’t have anything else to do. And this is the moral obligation of a man! It isn’t in my temperament to not help out. Isn’t that right?”

“Yes, that’s right!”

.....The users starting working again. With Shein, Kuma and Face’s party helping out, they managed to insert the poles of the fence into the ground. At that time one trailer truck arrived.

“Ark, good to see you again!”

A middle aged man with a rough beard greeted him. He was the president of Hammer Industries who explained about the gallstones when Ark first arrived.

“I was in sector S-15 when I heard rumours that pioneers are gathering here again. My specialty is gallstone fusion so I have to take advantage of this place. It is perfect now that those damn Larius people have withdrawn. But I didn’t know you were the administrator of this sector. Can I do business here?”

“Welcome!”

Ark eagerly replied as they shook hands. It was more imperative for his sector to have stores than a Fairy or port. Pioneers could buy or sell various things. Ark also had a lot of supplies that needed to be sold. Ark also repaired equipment using Cheksun’s toolbox but he couldn’t repair magic or rare items. He had reached the limit. Then the store appeared like rain in a drought!

“Gid-nim is a comrade who fought with me against the Kero clan. You also suffered from the incident so I will only collect a tax of 1 copper for the next 6 months. That will apply to any other merchants who received damage here.”

“Is that true?”

“Of course. I promise.”

It would take 6 months to truly establish the sector. He would rather attract a wide variety of stores in order to quickly grow the sector.

“I see. Then I’ll contact the previous stores and gather them. I have a lot of friends who will come running if these are the conditions.”

Ark’s tax-free policy started building S-20 up. Gid also contacted the previous stores who used to be there and they gathered one by one in S-20. Users naturally started gathering to use the stores. Pioneers also started coming from distant cities thanks to Slayer, Leon and Melina’s promotion. When S-20 first started, there was only Ark and the Royal Guards members. Thanks to their steady efforts, the population was able to reach 500 in just a fortnight. Meanwhile Shein’s work was also proceeding steadily and the fence entered the

final stages.

“.....The time has come!”

Ark launched a full scale commercialization.

Sector S-20's special opening event!

The first 1,000 people to register will receive a lifetime pass to the gallstone dungeon for only 10 silver!

You absolutely can't miss this chance of a lifetime!

That was the new sign erected at the entrance of S-20. Usually pioneers had to pay a fee of 1 silver to enter a sector. This was 10 times the amount but the package meant they could enter the dungeon for an unlimited amount of time! When considering that most pioneers needed to hunt in a place for a minimum of 10 times, that was an exceptional price. Of course that was just bait to advertise his goods.

“I've secured 1,000 customers. And the lifetime pass means that they won't leave S-20. I need customers to raise the population. A population of 2,000 is required in order to apply for a Fairy! I have half of that with just the package!”

This was the real purpose of the sale package. The packages sold like hot cakes. The 500 pioneers already in S-20 purchased the package immediately and the new users who arrived also bought it without any hesitation. It was rapid progress! S-20 quickly regained its previous energy. It wasn't just S-20 that grew over time. The users who bought the lifetime pass killed the Thanatos in the upper layer!

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

Meanwhile 11 people were digging in the darkness.

“Pant pant pant, how many days have passed?”

“Damn, how would I know? I haven't seen the sunlight you know.”

The Royal Guards had been digging for a fortnight now! However

their state was actually better now than when they first came in. There was no choice. They had become accustomed to it. Eat breakfast, dig, eat lunch, dig, dig dig! They had spent the last fortnight only digging.....

-You have experienced the profound sense of 'Dig' and the skill proficiency has increased to Lv. 2!

This message appeared x11! Finally their Dig skill had increased! All members had reached intermediate level in Dig. This meant they could dig much faster while consuming less stamina.

"We don't have to worry about dying anymore."

"I agree. At first I thought it was worse than the Silver Hand's training but now I've got used to it. It turns out I can adapt to digging."

"Besides, digging isn't as bad as I thought."

"That's right. Take a look at this. Do you see my muscles here? Huhuhu, isn't it wonderful? These muscles are a result of the labour."

They had time to chat while digging.

"Frankly, I was quite resentful when Hyung-nim first made us start digging. We had finally met after all that suffering and then he made us do this. But like Hyung-nim said, S-20 is our home now. If we don't work then who will?"

"Yes, sometimes a leader needs to make harsh commands."

"Our way of thinking was too short. We can't compare Hyung-nim to the evil Silver Hand."

They were still unaware. The Silver Hand were only following the training program Ark gave them. Anyway, their appreciation for Ark once again rose! Of course, this was due to Ark's brainwashing of 'S-20 and our future.' At any rate, they continued working while having the wrong impression of Ark. Their growth wasn't just in digging.

“That’s it! We’ve pierced through here as well!”

Kukung!

The members cleared out the dirt and revealed a cave. Then several pair of red eyes appeared in the darkness. They were the Thanatos that appeared in Mt. Fargo’s dungeon! The regeneration limit of the dungeon used to be 2~3 monsters at once. However as many as 5 were gathered. And the members were working in the intermediate layer. The Thanatos here were level 140~150.

“Sheesh, this place is also infested. They’re like cockroaches.....”

But there was no tension in the faces of the Royal Guards. They had already swept the level 100 Thanatos in the upper level and came down to the middle. And they had spent 10 days in the intermediate level. Now they had no difficulty cleaning up the Thanatos. That’s because the crowd of Thanatos also raised their levels. And there were 11 of them. Now the Thanatos were just like cleaning up cockroaches!

“Let’s take care of them quickly and move to the next place.”

Mellin took out a machine gun while the other members armed themselves with hammers or swords.

“Electromagnetic Hammer!”

“Speaker!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

And they started earnestly eradicating the pests! The repetition of this situation meant the Royal Guards in their 60’s could reach level 70 within a fortnight.

[-Mellin has acquired a Gallstone (Intermediate).]

“Isn’t this good?”

Gallstones would also fall occasionally.

“Now we’re finished! Shall we go if we don’t want to be stuck in the

dungeon forever?”

They once again took up their shovels and crossed the dungeon. Meanwhile a man was watching them with warm eyes.

“I don’t have to worry about them for the moment.”

It was Ark.

“The sector is rapidly growing and the members are working fine so I don’t need to meddle. I can concentrate on my own work.”

While all of this was going on, Ark hadn’t just been playing around. Ark focused on growing the sector, encouraging the Royal Guards in the dungeon, helping Shein with construction and managing the pioneers. However Ark had other challenges remaining. He spent all of his free time on the tasks he hadn’t completed yet.

“But in the meantime I’ve learnt quite a few things. This time.....!”

Ark clenched his fists and turned his body.

Susususu.

A blue light wound around his body. It started from the bottom and the swirling speed started to gradually increase as it reached the top of his head. Then it changed into an intense white light and was sucked into his head. That process repeated a few times until all of the blue light was converted to white. Finally the light surrounding his body was completely white.

-You have succeeded in the Elim’s Heart Force conversion!

Character Information <Mental Power: 0 (+315) Mana: 0 Force: 1825> has replaced it.

“That’s it!”

Ark shouted with flashing eyes. He had converted all his mental power and mana into force. He had been honing Elim’s Heart Force until he could switch all of his mana and mental power into force. Of

course, this wasn't Ark's challenge. It was just the transition time into force. This was all preparation for his task.

–Are you ready now?

Ark heard a distant voice. The voice came from a sphere of light in the centre while stone statues were lined up on either side. This was the Elim's Sanctuary that had been sealed off for hundreds of years. Ark looked at the light orb and nodded.

"Yes, I am ready."

–Is this your fifth time?

"This is going to be the last."

–I hope so as well. I don't want to see the pathetic form of the successor I have been waiting hundreds of years for anymore. But I don't want to see you die so you can call for help at any time.

"That will never happen."

–I'll believe it when I see it.

The light orb moved to the other end of the sanctuary. Then a passageway opened and two warriors appeared. This place was the successor's training centre. Ark had actually known this place existed when he was flying back to Tatuine with Marquis Martin. After receiving the Athamas quest, he had opened Xanax's ship log. Page 3 was sealed! The seal was released after he became Elim's Heir but he hadn't read it yet. He thought Xanax would've recorded the location of the Divine Artefacts or skills on it. Ark quickly opened the log book page on his Nymphé. But in contrast to what he expected, the information on page 3 was just a single line.

–Begin from the training centre.

He learnt the meaning of those words when he came back to the sanctuary.

–Training centre? Yes, that is here. That is the place where the Elim

trained in the basics of swordplay. What? Xanax wrote that in his journal? Well, speaking of that.....I remember. Xanax entered the training centre the last time he came here. I thought he was just reminding himself of his original intention before leaving for a long trip. But he might've left something for his successor who would come one day. That means you can't receive it until you pass the training centre.

Pass the training centre! This was cumbersome for Ark.

'I have to pass this as well?'

Ark headed to the training centre straight away! And he had been on the verge of dying when he was warped away by the light orb. He challenged it 4 more times but it was a crushing defeat! It wasn't a problem with his level. No, levels didn't matter in the training centre.

-A mysterious power has triggered the balancing levels effect.

<Everybody who enters the training centre will have their level fixed to level 50 and the equipment and stats of the character readjusted.

In addition, any weapon except for 'Heir's Sword' can't be used here>

Ark felt a sinking feeling at the message that appeared when he stepped into the training centre. Level equalization was fixed to level 50! The degree of difficulty would be the same even if he was level 999. That meant the user required combat skills in the training centre! It was more pitiable than that. Ark had confidence that he wouldn't be pushed by normal users in a 1 on 1 fight. While his battle with Valencia was quite close, he had been pushed by the Red Slaughterer because of his level not his skills. Nevertheless, he lost 5 out of 5 times. He couldn't even pass the place called the basic training centre. It was frustrating at first. However that idea soon changed.

'I started regaining my combat sense from New World after fighting Valencia. But it isn't like that. His senses felt even better after

fighting the Red Slaughterer. That means my senses are still rusty and I haven't regained everything. No, I can't be satisfied if I couldn't defeat the Red Slaughterer. I....need to become stronger than that!

The devastating self-criticism! There was no future for those who don't self-reflect. He started practicing the taekwondo exercises that he had been neglecting since New World. In the past he had no trouble kicking while standing on one foot but now he was unsteady. He once again realized how rusty he was. That was the problem. Ark had regained some of his previous combat senses. However, that feeling meant nothing if his body couldn't follow along.

'This is igniting the oil in my stomach!'

Fire burned inside Ark and he started exercising. He got up early at dawn to begin jogging and then started his taekwondo exercises. It also awoke the feeling of when he practiced swordplay in the past. The training affected the game. The hell training that the Royal Guards went through! Ark also started a training program for his body. So after a fortnight!

'I can do it! No, I will do it!'

Ark lifted his blue lightsaber.

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Three troopers emerged from the darkness. At the same time, bullets started to rain all over the place. The troopers were holograms but he still felt pain from the bullets and his health was still reduced. But it was the movement of the troopers that was more threatening. The 3 people moved in unison and cornered Ark. When he entered the first time, he had become riddled with bullets.

'This time it will be different!'

Ark rotated his body like a spin top while swinging his sword. The sword sparkled and bullets scattered all over the place. It was Sword Defense that he learnt in Athamas! He used the special quality of the lightsaber to change the trajectory of the bullets. While dealing with the troopers in the training centre, he realized that Sword Defense wasn't as simple as he thought. The orbit of a

projectile could be changed! In other words.....

Ping! Ping! Ping!

A bullet that Ark deflected penetrated a trooper on the opposite side. It meant he could change the trajectory in the direction that he desired!

‘Sword Defense can be used for attack and defense!’

Ark narrowed the distance and attacked the trooper that had stumbled. The light carved over the body in a complex pattern and the trooper fell down.

“One down! Shield Emission!”

Ark shouted as he lifted the shield. Then the shield broke into pieces and attacked the troopers. The fallen trooper disappeared into particles of light. The situation turned from 3 against 1 to 2 against 1! The decreased number of bullets meant it was easier for him to move. He took care of the rest one by one until the two troopers had dissolved. But Ark didn't lose his tension.

‘Now is the real start!’

When the troopers disappeared, 3 people holding lightsabers showed up. It was a mistake to think that opponents with a sword were easier than those with a gun. If those were real bullets then he would die but this was a game. It wouldn't make a difference if they were level 100 unless they dealt a deadly blow. That's why skill could overpower the troopers. Ark proved it with the troopers just now. It meant warriors were the next checkpoint.

Wiing! Wiing! Wiing!

The lightsabers headed towards him from three different directions! There were no gaps while they were attacking and they immediately changed to a defense stance afterwards. Therefore one technique was a must.

“Defense Break!”

A vortex poured out from Ark's sword. The attackers quickly

retreated in a defense posture but they collapsed the moment the vortex hit them. Defense Break was a technique to deal with the opponent's defense stance! His sword penetrated their chest. Ark clung tenaciously to them like a wolf's fang was in the enemy's neck and the attacker eventually disassembled into particles of light. Once 1 person was dealt with, the remaining 2 became disorganized.

"Sonic Sword! Defense Break!"

Ark relentlessly attacked over and over again. The light continuously crossed through the darkness. The result was that the remaining 2 turned into particles of light. It had been 10 minutes since he entered the training centre. He was breathing harshly from not being able to rest. And.....Ark finally reached the last checkpoint. Then 3 more warriors appeared from the light! They were fighters holding a lightsaber in one hand and a gun in the other. Troopers had emerged at the 1st checkpoint. And warriors holding swords were at checkpoint 2. Now even more difficult warriors had appeared at the 3rd checkpoint. The fighters were difficult opponents.

Wiing! Tutung! Wiing! Tutung!

If he avoided the bullets then he was hit by the sword, if he avoided the sword then he was hit by a bullet! There was no time to think with the 3 fighters attacking.

'No, I can't think! From now on it is instinct! I have no choice but to believe in my instincts!'

Ark realized this after being defeated 3 times. He had to attack without thinking. If he started to think then he would respond too slowly. So he was better off not thinking. He entrusted his body to his senses.

'There is no way back. If I can't win then I'll die.'

Ark ignited his fighting spirit after he was pushed into a tight corner. This was different from fear. It was a manifestation of his will! All the nerves in his body started to become extremely sensitive. He stopped thinking. There was no need to think. He had fought them 3 times already. His body knew what to do before his

head. His body flowed naturally and his sword reached his destination. It was faster than he could think!

Jajang!

The sound was of sword hitting flesh. His sword had used the exact timing to hit the vital spot!

“Galaxy Sword!”

At the same time, Ark’s sword stretched out like a fan. And the fan of swords struck the fighters. Ark narrowed the distance and struck the shaken fighter. He used Defense Break, Sonic Sword and then Galaxy Sword! The fighter that was hit with the continuous attacks changed into light particles. The initiative had returned to Ark.

‘I see it! I can see the movement of the fighters!’

His confidence surged upwards! That confidence made Ark’s sword even sharper. He also had the timing of their gunfire. Ark’s body moved before they even pulled the trigger and the bullet missed him by a large margin. His lightsaber moved before the bullet even hit the wall on the other side. And finally!

-Critical hit!

Snap! Pajijjik!

The lightsaber penetrated the neck of the fighter and it disappeared.

“Pant pant pant! Pant pant pant!”

Ark breathed in harshly and flopped down. Sweat seemed to flow from all the pores in his body. However his mind was surprisingly clear.

“I-I did it! I finally passed the 3rd stage!”

Delight surged inside his body. If he passed easily then he wouldn’t feel the pleasure of winning. Ark could only celebrate such a victory after the darkness. Then a light soared up from a pyramid in the centre. Then a helmet appeared from it! It looked like the helmet the Spartans would wear a long time ago.

“Don’t tell me this is.....?”

An information window popped up when Ark grabbed the helmet.

-Elim’s Helmet (Unique)

Item Type: Helmet Wearer Restriction: Elim’s Heir

Defense: 35 Durability: 100/100

A helmet handed down to the Elim.

The Elim were mighty presences with a strong mentality that wouldn’t yield to any temptation while protecting the galaxy. This helmet was created by the Murat using ancient techniques in order to raise the Elim’s mentality even more.

When wearing this helmet, you will gain strong resistance to evil powers and it will be easier to switch to force. In addition, this helmet is equipped with a vast database that can automatically record battle scenes for analysis.

<Immunity to mental energy +50%, Force recovery rate +50%>

Special Option (Battlefield Memory): When a battle is recorded on the helmet, you can return to that battle and fight it again.

A unique helmet! Immunity to mental energy +50%.....he had never fought against an Esper properly but he was sure it would have a huge effect. Force recovery rate also increased by 50%. But the even more significant thing was that this helmet was left by Xanax for his successor.

“Then perhaps?”

Ark wore the helmet. A black fog appeared in front of him and hazy images were shown. The image stored in the helmet, probably by Xanax, was of many planets in a constant orbit. They weren’t really planets. The planet shaped objects were moving around according to Ark’s hand. This was Xanax’s power. But Ark felt like he was the one moving the objects. It was like invisible strings were attached from his fingers to the objects. The objects moved according to the

movement of Ark's hand. After a while.

-A new skill (Occupation Restricted ☆☆☆) has been learnt.

Psychokinesis (User, Active): You have gained the helmet left to you by Xanax after passing the training centre. After wearing Elim's Helmet, you were able to catch a glimpse of Xanax's power. One of the most basic uses of force is telekinesis techniques.

This is one of the basic ways of using force but it needs to be taught by a mentor in order to understand the way of utilizing it. Xanax was able to communicate the tips to you through Elim's Helmet.

The success rate of this power will depend on your concentration.

<It is possible to move small objects at a relatively close distance using only mental power>

Force consumption: 50

A new skill! Ark never imagined that he would receive a skill like this. An image then appeared on his Nymphé. Letters similar to the ones in the logbook were written on the screen of his Nymphé.

—How wonderful, my heir.

This is proof that the one who inherited my will has passed the training centre. I pay my respects to your efforts. I left my helmet here to reward your hard work. I'm sorry but unfortunately this is all I can give you now.

I'm leaving on a trip now and there is no guarantee I will come back. Therefore I've laid down some necessary measures for my heir to continue the Elim's mission if I don't come back. Even I don't know where I will travel yet. That's why I won't leave everything here.

I will be leaving for another place. A place where 5 planets become one light. I will leave a mark for you in the deep centre.

“As expected, it wasn’t in this room.”

He needed to go to some other places to find the remaining skills and Divine Artefacts. Ark left the training centre and explained this to the orb of light.

–A place where 5 planets become one light.....

The light orb blinked. It seemed to be loading.

–I don’t know the place you’re talking about. I don’t know what you mean by 5 planets becoming one light.

.....The loading failed.

“Doesn’t that mean a place with the correct angle that 5 planets line up would look like one planet?”

–Those terms are too broad. Do you know how many planets there are in the galaxy? There are hundreds of celestial bodies that will periodically move into that arrangement. Will you go around to all those planets and ignorantly look for it? Do you know how many hundreds of planets there are?

“No but.....”

–Xanax left a clue for his heir. There has to be a specific hint somewhere in his writing. You have to figure out what it is.

A frustrated sigh emerged from Ark’s mouth. He had expected that he could go search for Xanax’s relics after passing the training centre. Yet he kept on running into a war over and over again. If this was a general fantasy game then he could recklessly run around but this was Galaxian. The size meant he couldn’t run around blindly. Like the light orb said, he needed to figure out the clues left behind by Xanax so he could narrow the search range.

‘Does this mean I have to search for some more clues?’

Then Ark’s Nymphe vibrated and a voice message appeared.

–Ark-nim, it is Shein. There is someone at the sector entrance looking for Ark.

“For me? Who?”

–*They said they would tell you directly.*

“Excuse me.....”

Ark looked uncomfortably at the man in front of him. Ark had received a notification that someone was looking for him. But Ark only left the Elim’s Sanctuary after 20 minutes. In fact, this wasn’t the first time he got visitors. Ark was a user who received the titles of Beltana and Athamas’ Hero. Slayer, Leon and Melina were also in the middle of promoting sector S-20 while accomplishing their billboard duties. Therefore sometimes pioneers would come to S-20 just to see Ark. He thought it was just another pioneer requesting him so he saw no reason to hurry. He had wandered around after receiving the report. But the man waiting wasn’t ordinary. The man looking for Ark was surprisingly.....

“I am Buldio, the section chief of the federation’s 1st internal affairs department.”

Someone from the federation’s administration! He was also from the internal affairs department. It was normal for the populace to cower when meeting someone with an official title like that. Ark was one of them as well. He had a number of reasons for that. Ark hadn’t legitimately become the administrator of S-20 but received it through a quest. The sector originally fell under the jurisdiction of the Domestic Affairs department. He received it thanks to Marquis Martin. Marquis Martin had exercised a little pressure to skip the intermediate examination process.

‘The internal affairs department investigates wrongdoings! Did he come to investigate me?’

Naturally he would feel uneasy. Ark asked with a deliberately unconcerned expression.

“What business does the section chief of the internal affairs department have with me.....?”

“In fact, I’m visiting with a request.”

“A request?”

Ark asked with a confused expression.

“What request would Section Chief-nim have for me?”

“I’d like you to find some people. No, I want you to rescue them.”

“I don’t understand what you’re saying.”

“Let me explain.”

Buldio nodded and said.

“Not long ago, a riot occurred at the orbit prison Stael and several prisoners escaped. Some staff from my division chased after the prisoners. A few days ago, they were finally located in the northernmost Harmadon constellation on a planet called Amara. However I lost contact with my staff members yesterday. The guys chasing the prisoners on Amara were caught in a trap and only one crew member who was waiting at a certain distance wasn’t caught.”

“How exciting. So?”

“Like I said, I’m asking for Ark-nim’s help.”

“Don’t your employees belong to the federation? Then shouldn’t the federation be in charge of the rescue operation?”

“There are a few problems.”

Buldio sighed and continued.

“Recapturing the prisoners was a top secret mission. The federation would be in a difficult situation if the media finds out that prisoners escaped from Stael. Only a small number of federation members know about the mission. Even if the pursuers are in a difficult situation, the federation can’t move.”

“But aren’t there special agents in the federation?”

“That’s why I came to Ark.”

“Eh?”

“Ark-nim is a user who received the titles of Beltana and Athamas’ Hero. You gained the dame on Beltana in a way similar to a secret agent. So I thought Ark-nim would be qualified for this mission and I also received Marquis Martin’s recommendation.”

Ark’s face tightened after hearing about Marquis Martin’s recommendation. Ark was entwined quite closely with Marquis Martin after Beltana. Marquis Martin was a troublesome existence as well as a VIP customer for Ark. He gave difficult quests but the reward if successful couldn’t be compared to normal quests. S-20 was one such reward. The relationship with a useful NPC was give and take. Ark needed to maintain a good relationship with Marquis Martin. But he wasn’t always thankful to have a VIP customer. This was unofficial but it was still a quest from the federation. No, it was an informal quest so he might be able to extort more rewards. But a federation quest would take a lot of time.

‘My philosophy is to accept quests but.....’

Most quests could take its time being completed. But if he accepted this quest then he would need to fly to the fringes of the galaxy immediately. However Ark still needed to solve the clues left behind by Xanax as well as help S-20 grow. Leaving this place for a long time would be a burden. So Ark had every intention of politely declining.

“I received some achievements in the Beltana and Athamas war. However a lot of it was due to luck. I’m too inexperienced for a heavy task like this. So please look for other people. There should be qualified people other than me.....”

“You can’t reject it.”

Buldio interrupted Ark’s words.

“Ark-nim is the reason why she is involved in this situation.”

He said it was Ark’s fault the federation employees were caught by prisoners? Ark was amazed by this outrageous remark.

“Do you remember the name Irina?”

Ark’s eyes popped out at the name.

“Irina? Then the employees caught by the prisoners.....”

“She is a part of them. Ensign Irina is a member of my division. She incurred Commander Haman’s anger on Beltana and was sent to chase after the prisoners. She wanted to help a trapped prisoner so they thought she should be the one to recover the escaped prisoners of Stael.”

“Because of me.....!”

A moan emerged from Ark’s mouth. In fact, Ark hadn’t seen Irina since returning from Beltana. He never saw her in the hospital when his mother had regular check-ups. That’s why he was worried. Now Irina needed Ark’s help. Besides, she was in such a situation because of Ark. He didn’t know what happened but he couldn’t pretend ignorance anymore.

“What do I need to do?”

“Ensign Irina didn’t make a mistake.”

Buldio nodded with satisfaction.

“The airship I came on will take you to Tatuine. You will then travel from Tatuine to Amara. Once you arrive on Amara, one member of the pursuing team will be waiting for you. The name is Hajin. He’ll explain more about the situation.”

<Rescue the Pursuers>

You have received a secret mission from the internal affairs department of the federation. The pursuing team chasing after the escaped prisoners from Stael have been caught in a trap and captured. Buldio was looking for a secret agent and Marquis Martin recommended you.

This mission is top secret. If the media gets wind of the Stael breakout incident then the federation will be placed in a difficult situation. In addition, the lives of the pursuing team can’t be

guaranteed. Therefore you must sneak into Amara as a regular prisoner and meet a sergeant to quickly assess the situation and rescue them.

Difficulty: B+

Irina's name wasn't mentioned in the quest window. In other words, Irina was something that Buldio thought would convince him. The ever evolving artificial intelligence mean the NPCs now thought like real users. Just like Lucifer.....

But now wasn't the time to think about that.

"I'll get ready soon."

Ark called Mellin and Hegel outside. They were the people Ark trusted with running S-20 while he was away. Ark left the management of S-20 to them and boarded Buldio's airship.

Kwaaaaaaah-!

1 airship crossed the sky. A young man looked up at the noise from the airship.

"An airship from the federation? That's rare. Seeing the federation's airship in a place like this."

The young man watched the airship for a while before shaking his head.

"No, that doesn't matter now."

And he operated his Nymphe while looking around at the environment.

"Yes, there is it. That hill is Mt. Fargo. Where sector S-20 is location. Finally.....I finally get to meet Ark. Soon.....soon I can meet Ark!"

He ran through the dense jungle with an excited expression. The young man who had just received amnesty on Athamas was Rapid.

Amara

Music came from an old radio. The quaint bar had a somewhat uneasy atmosphere. The guests were all staring at one man. A bearded man was sitting in the centre of the bar with an arrogant expression like he was a king.

“Hey, what are you doing? More alcohol! Hat hat hat hat!”

The man laughed as he made a lot of noise. But there was no one who dared say anything. They just watched with anxious looks. Then some guests got up and approached the man’s side. The bearded man looked up with an angry expression.

“Hey! What are you guys doing? Where are you going?”

“No, we have sudden business.....”

“Don’t make a sound and sit. Don’t make me say it in a method you’ll understand!”

“B-but.....”

Then the door of the bar opened and one man entered. The man silently dusted off the dirt on his body and crossed through the bar. He passed in front of the bearded man whose face contorted like a piece of toilet paper.

“Hey! You, over there!”

“Me? Why?”

“Who told you to come in so selfishly? Huh?”

“Are you the bar owner?”

“No.”

The man laughed at the bearded man’s answer. He turned around, causing the bearded man to stand up angrily.

“You asshole, do you want to die? Don’t you know who I am?”

“I don’t want to cause any problems. I just want to see to my business and leave.”

“What? A problem? You want to just leave? Ha! This fool. If you don’t know who I am then I’ll tell you directly. Listen well. I am the bloody slaughterer Mook-nim!”

The self-styled bloody slaughterer Mook lifted his pistol. At that moment, a flash crossed the bar.

“U-unbelievable.....”

Mook stuttered as a blue lightsaber was held to his neck. The man holding the lightsaber stared at him with cold eyes.

“Yes, does the bloody slaughterer Mook-nim want to continue?”

“Ah, no.”

“The door is over there.”

“Huh? Ah, yes! Goodbye!”

Mook quickly put away his gun and bolted from the bar. The people watching anxiously breathed with relief.

“A-awesome! He got Mook with a sword.....”

“Who is that man? Isn’t this the first time we’ve seen him? I don’t understand it but he is clearly a pioneer.”

The people gawked at the man and murmured noisily. However the man just sighed.

‘Damn, this planet.....’

He had unintentionally directed a scene from a western movie. The man’s name was Ark.

“This is Amara?”

Ark looked around. He had arrived at the universal terminal after returning to Tatuine with Buldio. He took an astral ship that traversed the universe to reach Amara.

The galaxy contained countless number of stars. The name alone wasn't enough to get a full sense of the vastness that transcended imagination. The distance between some planets were thousands of light years. It would take hundreds of thousands of years if the ships went at the speed of light. Therefore all long distance ships were capable of warp movement.

So 24 hours after leaving Tatuine. Ark crossed the galaxy and arrived on Amara.

"This feels like an entirely different world."

A sandstorm raged on the red earth. Amara's space terminal was situated in the centre of the city. The onion shaped roofs of the buildings made it look like a medieval Arab city. But this was a SF game. Androids wandered the streets while airships flew around.

"This is my first visit to the planet."

He didn't come here to sightsee.

-You have connected to the federation's special communication network.
--

–This code is.....federation troops?

He entered the security code on his Nymphé and a distant voice was heard.

"I'm not from the federation. I'm the pioneer referred by Lieutenant Colonel Buldio."

–Pioneer.....

The voice said with disappointment.

"Are you Sergeant Hajin?"

-That's right. You are?

“I am called Ark.”

–Ark? Ho, Beltana’s Hero?

There was no one in the federation who didn’t know Ark’s name. The disappointed tone quickly changed after hearing Ark’s name. Sometimes fame wasn’t necessarily a bad thing.

“I heard a summary of the situation from Buldio-nim. I would like to meet you and find out more about the local situation. Where should I go?”

–You must be contacting me from the space terminal. I’m approximately 200 km south of that place. I had to hide our ship. I’m sorry but can I send the coordinates to Ark-nim? We can talk more when we meet.

“Understood.”

Ark registered the coordinates in his Nympe and ran across the city. Amara wasn’t a prosperous planet. It wasn’t developed compared to other planets in the galaxy. But the shops that he passed displayed some unusual items. Of course, now wasn’t the time to look at such things. Soon the buildings decreased and a wide wilderness stretched out in front of him. The red earth was the characteristics of Amara’s appearance.

“Now then.....”

“Hey, you over there. Wait a minute.”

Ark was pulling out his air board. Then 3 people wearing rags emerged from the back of a building.

“Is this your first time on Amara?”

“That’s right.”

“Then who is in your group?”

“I’m alone.”

“Ah, it is like that. Then.....”

The men exchanged looks and pulled out their guns.

“Put down that air board quickly if you don’t want to be riddled with bullets!”

A pioneered planet was basically lawless like the Outlands. It was a place where the Rama, Aschulat and federation had no power. Some planets would have lords but their influence was only inside the cities. It was a complete lawless zone once outside the city. Even if murder was committed, there would be no punishment when moving to another city. Of course Ark had no intention of being robbed or killed. So he pulled out the lightsaber.

.....Kill!

And that was just the beginning.

“Hey! That guy! Stop your air board!”

He was stopped by highwaymen three times while riding his air board!

Ku ku ku ku! Waaaahhhhh!

Strange monsters also interrupted four times! After 3 hours and fighting 7 times, Ark managed to arrive at the coordinates Hajin sent him which was a bar in the middle of a small town.

‘I came to an annoying place.’

After the self-styled bloody slaughterer Mook disappeared. Ark sighed and headed towards the bartender. Then a hooded man sitting in a corner walked over to Ark and whispered.

“.....Are you Ark-nim?”

“Hajin?”

“Yes, please come over here.”

Hajin guided Ark to a corner.

“Thank you for coming here. I’ll say hello once again. I’m Hajin.”

Hajin took off his hood to reveal a young man in his 20s.

“I am Ark. I’m sorry but it seems urgent so please tell me more about the situation.”

“No it’s fine. I’m also thinking about the hardships that my colleagues must be going through.”

Hajin nodded his head and started to explain.

Irina and the other members of her team were given the task of capturing the prisoners who escaped from Stael. They found a clue on the space station called Kwai. The clue stated that they planned to go to the planet Amara. Irina landed the ship not far from this village and the crew started searching around.

“It wasn’t difficult to find their hiding place.”

“This area?”

“It is a cave approximately 5 km from the village. We were able to detect traces of the stolen federation aircraft in that cave.”

“You did well finding that place.”

“There was a traitor among the escaped prisoners.”

“A traitor?”

“Yes, a prisoner who was reluctantly picked up when they escaped from prison. He decided to cooperate to decrease the penalty if he was caught again.”

Of course Irina led the members and sneaked towards the hiding place. After a few hours he lost contact with them. That occurred a few days ago.

Hajin was the pilot who remained with the ship. He instantly sent an urgent communication to Buldio but Amara was thousands of light years away from Istana so the message took a few days. It was kind of funny that radio waves for communication was slower than a ship who moved using warp technology. But Hajin had to monitor the

cave so he couldn't move. In addition, the prisoners already knew the federation was pursuing them so he couldn't recklessly leave his ship somewhere. That's why Ark had to come here instead.

'This situation isn't immediately risky.....'

Those guys wouldn't kill Irina. Irina was a pioneer so she had an immortal body. If she was killed and revived with the Fairy then she would tell the federation their hiding spot. Therefore they needed to keep her inside the lair.

'But how can I possibly feel relieved? They don't know that Irina had contact the federation before sneaking in or that a soldier was stationed outside. They might take the risk of harming the crew and then running away to another place. How can I leave the captured Irina there?'

Ark looked around blankly while thinking. Then he noticed Hajin staring at him.

"Why are you staring like that?"

"No, just....."

Hajin blushed and scratched his head.

"It is clear that you have some type of relationship with Irina-nim. Normally she is a strict believer in the rules."

It was obvious that she strictly believed in the rules. She didn't even blink when the prisoners on Beltana were dying of starvation.

"Then?"

"So you must have a type of relationship is she went to rescue Ark-nim when you were trapped on Beltana. Ensign-nim also only reveals emotion when she is talking about Ark-nim. So I was just wondering what type of relationship it is."

"Irina-nim talked about me?"

"Yes, sometimes."

Ark felt a strange feeling after hearing Hajin's words. Ark was

interested in Irina for some reason but she was a woman he couldn't understand. When Irina helped him on Beltana, Ark thought that he had a good impression of him. However she didn't show any signs of it when he ran into her afterwards. He also couldn't say one word to her after seeing Irina at the hospital. Yet Irina had apparently talked about Ark. A man truly didn't know the heart of a woman. Anyway.....his motivation shot through the roof!

"Then let's leave immediately."

Ark got up with an expression full of motivation. Then the door of the bar opened and a middle aged man wearing armour entered.

"I heard that Mook came here again."

"Ah, Sheriff! It is okay now. A pioneer chased him away."

The bar owner pointed towards Ark. The Sheriff looked at Ark and asked with a surprised expression.

"A pioneer? Well, you must be quite good if you could chase away the villainous Mook. What is your name?"

"It is Ark."

"I never heard of that name. How long are you going to be here?"

"I won't be staying long."

"So there will be no problems. Anyway, I'm thankful that you chased Mook away."

"It was something I had to do. Don't think anything of it."

Ark answered and turned to leave. Then the bar owner hurriedly called to Ark.

"H-Hey! Wait a moment!"

Was he trying to give a compensation or something? Ark smiled at the thought and turned back around.

"You can't go without paying for the drinks!"

“Huh? Drinks? I didn’t drink anything.”

“It is the alcohol that Mook drank. You chased him away so shouldn’t you pay for it?”

He was smacked on the back of his head! Ark looked at the Sheriff with a stunned expression. The Sheriff nodded his head. It meant Ark had to pay for the drinks. Ark looked towards Hajin. Hajin turned out his pockets and only dust blew out.

“I’m sorry. Our funds were managed by Ensign-nim.....”

Amara, this damn planet. Nevertheless, he had to continue the quest!

‘Dammit!’

Ark kicked a stone with a furious expression. He was Ark. So far he never had money stolen from him in the game. However he ended up having to pay for Mook in the bar. The drinks cost 7 gold!

‘7 gold is what I could earn from selling a few lifetime passed to S-20.....’

1 pass was 10 silver. $7 \text{ gold} \div 10 \text{ silver} = 70 \text{ people}$! Resentment formed as he calculated it. Of course, rescuing Irina was important. But that was that, this was this.

‘I’m going to charge them! I’m going to charge the expenses to Buldio once I rescue Irina and the other members!’

Since becoming the CEO of Dark Eden, he became even more careful with his money. And he crossed the wilderness with Hajin for 1 hour.

“Here.”

Ark was expecting a rather plain cave. However Hajin was pointing towards a hole that looked like a giant crater. The structure gradually narrowed as it went down and a railway tracks spiralled downwards along the inner wall.

“According to the survey data, this used to be a mine. It was abandoned once it stopped producing anything.”

“Those fellows are hiding in the tunnels?”

“That’s right.”

Hajin looked at Ark anxiously.

“Will you be okay by yourself?”

“My mission isn’t to take out the prisoners but to rescue Irina’s crew. It is better if I move alone for a mission like that. And are there any other troops?”

Like Ark said, there weren’t any other soldiers to help him. If the numbers increased then those guys would probably kill Irina’s crew and escape on the transport ships. Of course it was different if the federation could completely surround them. But planets like this were designated as special zones in the treaty. Federation troops coming here would violate the treaty. And it would be bad if the media got a hold of the information. Ark could see why Buldio entrusted the mission to him. Ark hadn’t accepted the mission without thinking.

‘The number of escaped prisoners was 10 people!’

They were thugs but their long imprisonment meant their levels wouldn’t be high. So he could deal with them even if their numbers were high. Moreover, Ark had just graduated from the training centre yesterday. If he hadn’t completed that then he wouldn’t have accepted the quest.

“Hajin-nim should wait in the ship until I contact you.”

“Understood.”

Hajin replied as Ark stepped foot in the mine. Then Hajin who had been tinkering with his Nymphe screamed with surprise.

“Ark-nim, wait a minute! That is.....!”

Kikikiki! Kikikiki! Kikikiki!

The soil around Ark’s foot started shaking and a long object

emerged. 10 monsters that looked like snakes appeared at his feet! Saliva dripped from their sharp fangs as the snakes rushed at him. The snakes flew through the air like a shower of arrows!

“Rock snakes! Ark-nim, it is dangerous.....”

Hajin burst out screaming. Ark’s body became a flash of light. The flash of light vanished before explosively appearing again. The snakes diving towards Ark stopped moving. The afterimage of light disappeared and black blood spouted from the severed snakes. Ark held his lightsaber and stared at Hajin.

“What?”

“Ah, nothing.”

Hajin replied while gaping like a goldfish.

“The abandoned mine is full of rock snakes so be careful.”

“That is helpful advice, thank you.”

Ark laughed and nodded his head. But unlike his calm expression, his heart rate had actually doubled.

‘Pant pant, damn! I thought I was going to have a heart attack.’

Ark had been shocked by the rock snakes that suddenly popped out from the ground. If he was the previous Ark then he probably would’ve been bitten by the snakes. However Ark had changed. After his battle with the Red Slaughterer, he had trained in martial arts and passed the training centre. His reaction rate had increased a few times from what it was before. Ark’s heart might’ve been shocked but he could handle the situation.

‘Yes, I’ve become stronger!’

However the situation wasn’t good for his heart. Since then Ark carefully moved along the railroad tracks.

“Amazing. He is capable and careful! He is truly Beltana’s Hero!”

Hajin stared at Ark with amazement after witnessing his sword skills.

‘Phew, now.....’

Ark sighed and lifted his head. The mine was in the form of a huge hole. But it had a deep depth and he had to move quite a large distance along the railways tracks spiralling down. The problem wasn't the distance. It was the rock snakes! They popped up whenever he took a step. It was bad because they acted as an alarm. If the rock snakes kept on charging him then he might be detected by the escaped prisoners. It was the same even if he used Stealth.

-Rock Snakes-

Category: Space Monster Danger: B+

Combat Power: F

The rock snakes are creatures that can be occasionally seen on the outskirts of planets. Their combat power isn't that different from ordinary snakes but the characteristic is that thousands of them live in one area. In addition, they hide in the ground and are very sensitive to vibrations. They attack whenever they sense a vibration in the ground, making them very dangerous creatures. Many pioneers have been killed by it so it was labelled as a B-risk monster.

* You can gain additional information if you face the same type of monster many times.

This was the information of the rock snakes. They responded to vibration so stealth wouldn't work. However no matter how careful he was, he couldn't walk without causing vibration.....he came up with two methods. One method was using the air board. If he floated in the air then he wouldn't cause vibrations in the ground. But there was a risk of being discovered if he used the air board. Therefore he had to use the second method.

‘Swamp Walking!’

It was the method of distributing his weight while walking to avoid falling into a swamp! He managed to upgrade it one step further and could move without leaving a trace. It was perfect for an infiltration operation!

“.....Stealth.”

It was his survivor skill Stealth! Ark hid his body using Stealth and walked down using Swamp Walking. Ark had optimized his infiltration techniques during this mission. Anyway!

Sasasasak! Sasasasak!

Ark managed to descend to the bottom without making a sound. The bottom of the mine was a wide basin. A transport ship was laid out in a dark corner. It was probably the transport ships the prisoners had seized from Stael when they escaped. Thus far it was what he expected. By the way.....

”It’s not just one airship?”

There were 2 other airships landed in the huge basin.

‘Did those guys steal some more airships after escaping from Stael?’

Buldio and Hajin never said anything about that. But he wasn’t bothered about that.....the thing that caught his attention was the large disk in the centre of the basin. It was 10 metres in diameter. The dish seemed to be an antenna.

‘The size means that it couldn’t have been transported here using the airships. That means it was originally here.....however it doesn’t look old like the railroad tracks. What is the identity of this disk? Does it have anything to do with those guys hiding here?’

Ark looked at the disk for another moment before shaking his head.

‘No, now isn’t the time to look at that. I need to find Irina.’

Ark turned and looked at the cave across from him. There were tunnels in this mine.

‘I don’t see the escaped prisoners or captured federation crew anywhere. They must’ve locked up Irina somewhere in this cave.’

Ark crept towards the cave. And just as he was about to step foot in the cave.

“What are you doing?”

Some voices suddenly came from the cave. Ark gulped and quickly hid behind a rock. He licked his lips and grabbed his beam sword.

‘What, what the? Did I get caught?’

“Didn’t I tell you to stay and guard the antenna?”

Then another voice was heard from inside the cave. It came from where Ark was just about to step.

“Why should I? If someone comes then we will see them easily. And we’ve captured the federation soldiers so who will come? I’m tired of doing nothing.”

“But we haven’t found the federation soldier’s aircraft yet. Maybe there are still some people on the ship.”

“What can those guys do? The federation won’t be able to come here in huge numbers.”

“Shut up! How dare a lowly Katz answer back to me like that!”

“What? A lowly Katz? What did you say?”

“Don’t you know that you’re not that important for this task? If you miss this opportunity then I’ll go find some dogs. So stop spouting drivel and follow my orders. Disobedience won’t be permitted!”

“Understood! I understand! That absolutely won’t happen!”

‘Phew, I didn’t get caught.’

Ark sighed with relief.

‘By the way, what are those guys saying? Huh?’

Ark moved his body and looked inside the cave. There were 2

people inside the cave. One of them had an alien appearance. The body covered with fur had pointy ears, a snout and a tail swaying from the hips. He looked like.....

‘C-cat? Is he similar to the Meow?’

Ark was familiar with species resembling cats. An alien resembling the Meow who helped Ark a lot in New World was standing right in front of him. The game was different but he felt good seeing the Meow again. But unlike the Meow in New World, the Katz were criminals who had broken out of jail. They looked the same but the feeling was completely different. However that wasn’t the reason for Ark’s surprise.

‘That guy is.....?’

A man was rebuking the Katz. The man was wearing the same robe as the group who controlled Valencia and blew up the Laius’ shield energy panel? That wasn’t all. The face was almost identical.

‘The man wearing the robe self-destructed. So NPCs in Galaxian are able to revive using the Fairy. It could be the same person. But why would he be here? According to Buldio, the prisoners had broken out of Stael before the raid on Mt. Fargo occurred. If he was the same person then he couldn’t be the one who broke them out of jail. They must’ve joined after breaking out of prison.....why?’

Numerous questions popped into his head. However there was a problem even more urgent than that. There was a saying that hundreds of cockroaches would become visible after seeing one. There was no guarantee that the man in the robe was the only extra person here. Ark had been thinking that there were only 10 escaped prisoners. Yet the man who might’ve been with Valencia was here.

‘Yes, come to think of it. Irina formed a unit to chased after the prisoners. There were 15 people assigned. It was strange that they managed to be captured by only 10 enemies. But it could be explained if people other than the prisoners were hiding here. It is also the reason for the 3 airships. One belongs to the escaped prisoners while the remaining two belongs to the others present in the cave. Considering the size of the airships, the numbers would be

a lot.....damn, things have become more complicated!’

Things always become twisted every time Ark had a mission. It was a tradition that continued from New World. But he couldn’t just shrink away after coming all the way here.

‘I have no choice but to save Irina and escape quickly!’

“Sheesh! These Katz!”

Just as Ark was thinking this. The robed man snapped at the Katz and walked back inside the cave. Ark was going to use this chance to enter the cave behind him.

“Dammit, that bastard.....huh? What?”

The Katz who had been moving suddenly flinched and stopped. Then his nose started twitching and he approached Ark’s hiding spot.

“There is a strange smell in here?”

Ark felt his jaw drop after hearing the Katz’s words. It wasn’t necessary to say so but the alien appearance wasn’t just for looks. Cupa’s huge size gave him more stamina than humans while Kalliben’s third eye increased his hit rate with guns. In that case, the Katz had the sense of smell like a cat! Their sense of smell was more developed than other species. Ark hid using Stealth but he couldn’t conceal his smell.

Sniff sniff sniff! Sniff sniff sniff! Sniff sniff sniff!

-Stealth has been used.

<Probability of being detected by an enemy: 30%, 35%, 40%.....>

As expected, the probability of being detected quickly rose as the Katz neared.

‘Damn, should I attack before I’m detected?’

Stealth would be maintained until Force was consumed. However, if he cancelled it to use a skill then it would take some time before he could use it again. If he released Stealth then the cave infiltration

would become even more difficult. Even if he took the Katz by surprise, there was no guarantee he could defeat him without being detected.

‘If I’m found then I won’t get any rice. I have to find another way.....’

Then an ‘!’ popped into Ark’s head.

‘Yes, this is great!’

Ark’s hands moved like lightning!

“Heok! T-this scent! There!”

The Katz narrowed his eyes and crossed towards a rock. His sharp claws swung out as he grabbed something.

“Ohh! This smell! Why? Why does this smell like that? Where....hat! As expected, the taste is fish! Ohh, to be able to taste fish in a place like this! Hehehehe! Why did I only find it now? Ah, no! If I make too much noise then the others might notice. Huhuhuhu, this is mine! I’m going to eat it!”

He ran into a corner and crouched down. The object the Katz was ravenously shoving into his mouth was space food. Of course it wasn’t plain space food. It was the fish paste bar that he obtained from Jay and the octopuses after the incident in Charem! Ark had come up with the fish paste bar in his moment of crisis. A cat loved fish! The Katz would also be the same. Fortunately Ark could safely enter the cave thanks to the Katz munching on the fish paste bar.

‘Phew, it is a success. I’m glad I remember the tendencies of the Meow. I was able to use the fish paste bar in this way.’

However there wasn’t just 1 Katz. Katz posted as sentries caught his eye after entering the cave. But the nature of a cat was all the same. The sentries were stretched out and sleeping. He could understand why the robed man was frustrated. However it was fortunate for Ark. He only had to kill his footsteps and walk past. Of course some were awake but they were taken care of when he threw the fish paste bar. There were some people in the cave impervious to the fish paste bars. Aliens with small physiques were

gathered in groups around the cave. Wearing tattered rags and resembling frogs, they were the Kero clan who attacked Mt. Fargo.

‘As expected, the one who destroyed Mt. Fargo’s shield energy generator belongs to the same group as the person I just saw.’

However the Kero’s sense of smell wasn’t as developed as the Katz. Furthermore, they were mostly grouped in one place so he could easily avoid them. After crossing through the cats and frogs without a hitch, Ark was able to find a door at the end of the cave. It was crude like it was made in a rush but a large lock was attached to the handle. It was impossible for this door to originally belong to the mine. This meant the door was placed there. Then there could only be one reason why!

‘Here! Irina and the other members of the pursuing team are in here!’

Ark immediately used a wire to connect his Nymph to the lock.

-This device is protected by a security device.

Enter the security code or use Invaders to hack and release the lock.

This lock has a security rating of level 8. Your hacking skill is currently only Lv. 2 and you can only release level 4~6 locks.

<If you don’t know the password then try again after raising the level of your hacking skill>

‘Dammit, when I need hacking.....!’

He cursed as he saw the message. He had needed at least Hacking Lv. 6 in order to release the lock of Marquis Martin’s bag that he gave for a secret order. However his hacking was only at Lv. 2 and the lock was level 8. He had no intention of just leaving. However he couldn’t stay here to raise his skill.

‘What now?’

Ark struggled while hiding his body in a suitable place. Stealth lasted until his Force ran out. Ark hid his body and released Stealth. He

mediated for a while to recover his Force. How much time had passed? He suddenly heard footsteps crossing the cave.

‘.....That’s it!’

Ark’s eyes flashed and he raised his head. He then glanced at the password being entered into the iron doors. This was the moment Ark had been waiting for. Irina had been intentionally captured alive. This meant they would be fed unless the captor wanted them to die of starvation.

‘And it is the Kero clan! This is it!’

Cheolkeok.

The door opened and Ark who had used Stealth flew in like a bullet. Then the Kero entered the cell and closed the door. Ark rolled before getting to his feet and the Kero shouted as it noticed him.

–Keeck! A person!

No questions asked!

Wiing! Buong! Buong!

The trajectory of light spread across the space like crazy. The frightened Kero pulled out a sword but the battle on Mt. Fargo already demonstrated that it wasn’t a match for him. It had low combat power like a regular NPC. It was no use against a level 95 user! The Kero died in less than 30 seconds after pulling out his lightsaber. Ark turned around after slicing the frog to jelly and noticed some people. The first person he saw was a woman with long, straight hair! They locked eyes.

“Irina-nim!”

“You....Ark-nim? How did Ark-nim.....?”

Irina stuttered as she looked at Ark with surprised eyes.

“Ark? Did you say Ark? Oh my god! Ark?”

Someone suddenly got up violently from the corner. They shrieked and ran up to Ark.

“Dammit! This bastard! This is all because of you! It is because of you that I look like this!”

Light that calls the Darkness

Bakak-!

The sound of something splitting! Someone quickly ran up to Ark and thumped him on the head. Ark who had been staring at Irina looked around with a confused look.

“W-What is it? This guy? Why all of a sudden?”

“He is.....”

Irina tried to answer with a confused expression. The guy who hit him flinched and retreated.

“Yes! It’s me! I dared hit you!”

Bakak-!

He hit Ark once again! He hit the same spot and lumps formed a tower on his head. But this time he didn’t back away. He ran up and grabbed Ark’s collar with cuffed hands while shouting.

“Me! Say you know me! Say it!”

“What the, you? Who are you?”

“This bastard! Look closely! You know who I am!”

Ark looked closely at the person. But he still didn’t know. The only obvious thing was that he was an alien. But he had never seen an alien with skin that colour before. Furthermore, the large horns on the head.....ah, that was a lump that matched the one just given to Ark. Anyway, the face was sharp like a weasel. The alien gave off an intense expression so Ark would’ve remembered meeting him before.

.....That’s what he thought.....

Although he certainly gave off a familiar feeling. Ark searched

through his memories despite his aching head and managed to remember someone who gave off a similar impression. If the ugly alien holding his collar had fur covering his skin.....

“.....Tori?”

“This brat! What’s with the question mark? Don’t attach a question mark to my name!”

“Eek? You, you really are Tori? But you.....”

Ark murmured with a confused expression before a ‘!’ flashed in his head. Which reminded him, the jailbreak occurred on Stael. Tori had been imprisoned in Stael. But Ark thought that Tori was still imprisoned there. For Tori to be in a place like this.....

“What? Did you escape from jail?”

“E-escape from jail? I was caught!”

“Caught? By who?”

“Who else! Those damn Katz!”

Tori had experienced a lot in the meantime. His life had been miserable since being picked up by the Katz on Stael! He received a terrible beating from the Katz every day!

Tori cursed the Katz with a voice full of resentment and dripping with tears.

“Hrmm, you must’ve gone through a lot of suffering.”

“Ah? I must’ve gone through a lot of suffering? Is that all? Don’t you have a conscience? I went through all this trouble because of you!”

“Because of who? Are you trying to blame me?”

“Of course! You bastard! If only you hadn’t set off the alarm!”

“Ha! Stop playing around. You’re the one who caused the incident by trying to deceive me! Yet you’re blaming me? What kind of bullshit are you saying? And are you the only one who suffered? Do you know how much I suffered on Beltana? To be honest, my mind.....”

“What about your mind? Are you going to hit me? Huh? Yes, go and hit me! This bastard! I’m not scared of beatings anymore. No, haven’t I been hit already? Look at me! Are you a human?”

“You’re the one who suddenly ran up to me!”

Ark shouted angrily before suddenly asking.

“No, wait a minute. Why aren’t you with the escaped Katz?”

“He is the traitor who gave us information.”

Irina was the one who answered.

“After being kidnapped by the Katz, he left information for any pursuers on the hive called Kwai. But the Katz knew about it.”

That’s how the pursuers were caught. The Katz were aware the Tori left information and laid a trap for the pursuers. In the process Irina lost most of her crew members. Camel was seriously injured and 4 other members captured. And Tori was locked up with them as well.

“Can I ask why you’re here?”

“Of course it is to rescue Irina-nim.”

“Ah, yes.....”

Irina nodded indifferently.

“Then can you release us from the shackles and handcuffs?”

“Ah, yes.....”

Ark also nodded indifferently. This wasn’t how Ark pictured it. He heard that she was in danger and flew thousands of light years to rescue her. And he had finally reunited with her while she was in captivity. Something! It didn’t have to be much but it should be a more plausible scene! He had even directed such a scene when he jumped into the jail.

‘Because of that damn hamster.....’

Tori had broken the good atmosphere between them. It was like the

impressive video was skipped thanks to someone pressing the Del button.

“I don’t know what the situation is between the two of you but we should escape first.”

“.....Yes.”

Ark answered while glaring at Tori. Ark swung his lightsaber that he wanted to cut Tori with and removed Irina’s handcuffs and shackles. Irina rubbed her wrist and asked.

“Did you come alone?”

“Yes.”

“This will be hard.”

Irina sighed and said. Ark also had to admit there was an error in his plan. Originally Ark planned to rescue Irina’s group and subdue the criminals together. It was possible when he thought there were still 10 people. But the escaped prisoners weren’t the only ones alone here. There was the robed man and the Kero clan! Apart from the robed man, Ark had identified at least 200 Kero. Other than Irina, there was an additional 6 people in the jail. At least 2 people including Camel had suffered injuries so their combat power was significantly down. If an NPC didn’t treat the injury in a timely matter than a penalty will be applied. Anyway.....

The group wasn’t strong enough to deal with all the enemies. He had to give up on capturing the criminals and concentrate on escaping.

“My opinion is the same as Ark-nim. But there are a significant number of Katz and Kero gathered. It isn’t possible to reach the cave entrance with our power.”

“I have an idea.”

Ark smiled and replied.

“Wait here a moment. I’ll be back soon.”

Ark headed out and returned after 10 minutes with a pile of rags.

-Filthy Rags

Item Type: Cloak Wearer Restriction: –

Defense: 1 Durability: 13/20

Dirty pieces of cloth found in dumpsters. An awful odour is emitting from it. A person with a sinus problem might be able to stomach it but don't expect high defense.

They were the rags the Kero was wearing. Ark hid his body in a dark place and attacked a Kero patrol! He hid the corpses and looked for more Kero! He soon collected the rags that had a high possibility of falling. The Kero were only level 40~50. The cloak only had 1 defense so they had no choice but to die easily. However the cloak wasn't simply to defend the Kero. The surprising function not recorded in the information window.....

Weng- weng- weng- weng.

A group of people wearing smelly rags! There was a reason Ark had been able to pass through 200 Kero undetected even when using Stealth. The Kero were frogs. They were distracted eating flies. The loss of vigilance when eating made them no different from the Katz. Of course, not all of the frogs were looking for flies.

"This is for camouflage."

"Camouflage?"

"The Kero clan all wear these rags. If we disguise as the Kero clan then we can walk around."

Ark set an example and wore the rags. The face was hidden so anyone would think he was the Kero clan! After a while.....

The jail door opened and 8 people wearing rags emerged. They were Ark, Tori, Irina and 5 of her team.

'Huhuhu, I think this is a brilliant plan.'

A horrible odour was coming from the rags! They also imitated the

way the Kero were walking! Ark's strategy seemed to be working. The Kero clan gathered here weren't interested in Ark's group. It wasn't a situation where their hearts could be calm. They became anxious when a group of Kero suddenly headed towards them.

'Damn, did we get caught?'

Ark held onto the beam sword underneath his rags.

Nallum! Nallum! Nallum! Nallum!

The Kero flicked their tongues as they wound around Ark's group.

-Ugh, I'm hungry. You should eat. Because you can be called at any time. I'm still hungry.

And they headed somewhere else. The rags were covered with saliva and felt even dirtier but they moved ahead again. The group was able to safely reach the cave entrance where the Katz were gathered. In fact, Ark hadn't been able to understand the considerable difference between the Katz and the Kero when he first arrived. But he understood the moment he saw the rags. The Katz were a species sensitive to smell. And the Kero wore stinky rags. The Katz and Kero were species destined to never be close!

"Kyak! It stinks!"

"Uhh! Why did you guys come all the way here? Go away!"

"Ah! T-this is? Isn't this food that tastes like fish?"

When Ark's group arrived at the cave entrance, he threw the fish paste bars and the Katz didn't care about them anymore. Thankfully they finally escaped the cave! They just needed to follow the spiral upwards to leave the mine.

'That's it! We should climb up before those guys notice.....'

"Hey! You over there!"

Then he heard a rough voice from behind him. Ark flinched and turned his head. The robed man was angrily arriving!

“You guys, why are you standing in a place like this? Didn’t I tell you to wait inside? Answer now. Why did you come here? The punishment will depend on your answer.”

‘Dammit, we’ve already reached this point.....’

“Why are you answering me?”

Ark’s lips dried at the robed man’s words. Ark could understand the language of the Kero. But that was due to the Nymph’s translator function and he couldn’t actually understand their language. Of course the robed man expected the answer to be in the Kero’s language. Ark tried to mimic what he heard the Kero say as closely as possible.

“K-Kaegul?”

A vocal mimicry!

“You.....who are you guys?”

.....It didn’t work.

“Disclose your true identity! Punishment Lightning!”

The robed man shouted as lightning formed between his hands.

“Damn! They found us!”

Ark tossed off his rags and grabbed the beam sword. At the same time, blue light emerged from the end of the beam sword and it changed into a lightsaber.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Pajijiji! Pajijiji!

The lightsaber collided with the lightning. There was a burst of white light and the lightning scattered in many directions. The sparks flew into the dirt. The crew members at the back were reeling from the aftermath of the shock. Ark’s hand holding the sword started tingling. The immense power of an Esper!

‘Dammit, this guy will be tough.....’

Ark bit his lip until it became bloody.

“Ah! I’m not! They dragged me out by force!”

Tori shouted as he threw himself to the ground. What the hell.....this hamster bastard.....there was nothing he could say to a subservient action like that.

“Ark-nim!”

“Run! I will follow you soon!”

Ark was already rushing towards the robed man. Ark tried to strike downwards with his lightsaber and the robed man spread his hands towards Ark.

“Your soul was caught by me! Soul Chain!”

At the same time Ark’s body stiffened. But a message flashed after a moment.

-The power of the ‘Elim’s Helmet’ made you resistant to psychic energy!

<The hostile effect has been destroyed>

The Elim’s Helmet increased immunity to mental energy by 50%! The stopped sword struck downwards and hit the robed man.

“Cough! Unbelievable!”

The robed man grabbed his cut chest and retreated. Then he stretched out his arms and tried to use another technique.

“Shield Break!”

Ark cut the robed man’s arm with his sword. Shield Break was the skill to destroy an opponent’s defense stance. However this time he took advantage of the timing to block the enemy’s attacks. Ark blocked the robed man’s arm and pushed his left wrist towards the face.

“Shield activated! Shield Emission!”

Pajik! Pepeng! Papapapapa!

“Kuaaaaak!”

The robed man screamed and flew backwards. Glass fragments from the shield had hit the robed man's face. The face was torn from the number of fragments and blood poured down. The robed man shouted as he held his dripping face.

“Kuack! Catch.....no, kill all of them!”

“Those guys are fleeing!”

The Katz came flocking out of the cave. Once again, the Katz resembled the Meow from New World. It was the same with the Meow's agility. The Katz rushed across the basin at an incredible speed towards Irina's group. They suddenly stretched out 10 cm claws!

“Irina-nim, it is dangerous!”

“Sword!”

Irina turned around and shouted. Two swords popped out from her bag and she grabbed the handles. At the same time, dozens of swords made of light enveloped Irina's body. It was a great sword! When one sword disappeared another one would appear.....dozens of these swords seemed to form a sphere around Irina. However it wasn't a simple sphere. A sphere of blades!

“Kyaak!”

“This female is strong!”

The Katz stepped back and bared their fangs. They were familiar with Irina's skill from when they captured her. However Ark was shocked because he never saw her fight. No, to be honest he never imagined her fighting.

The first time he met her she was in charge of the prisoner's supplies. In reality he saw her wearing a dress while attending a party and was about to be humiliated. And this time she had been captured while chasing after escaped prisoners. Therefore an image of a fragile girl was lodged in his brain.

But it was normal when he thought about it. All users envied those who were selected by the galactic federation. It made no sense if she wasn't capable of combat. But the Katz weren't that easy to deal with. With two out of the five crew members injured, it was difficult to stop the Katz flocking from all sides.

–Kekek! The enemy!

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

In addition, the Kero had started to flock out of the cave as well.

'There is no chance if we fight here. It is imperative to escape!'

Ark bounced back the bullets with his lightsaber and ran towards Irina.

"Hik! Me! Me too!"

The ignored hamster followed behind him.....

"Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!"

Dozens of swords swirled out like a fan. He pushed away the Katz pressing Irina and Camel on one side. He then joined the group and said to Irina.

"Irina-nim, follow behind me!"

"Yes!"

"Please support the rest and follow!"

Ark shouted as he jumped onto the railroad tracks. He had ran over 10 metres when dozens of rock snakes sprang out at him. This was the reason Ark took the lead.

'My speed can't be slow! Concentrate my senses!'

Wiing! Wiing! Wiing!

The blue lightsaber continuously followed a trajectory. The rock snakes fell as they were cut. Ark swept through most of the rock snakes before they could attack Irina. However the Katz were

caught by the snakes.

“Kyaak! These damn snakes!”

The Katz couldn't increase their speed thanks to the rock snakes. Of course that only affected a small number of Katz.

–*Shoot!*

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The Kero started firing their machine guns. But like Mt. Fargo demonstrated, their hit rate wasn't that high.

Ping! Ping! Ping!

Most of the bullets only hit the stone around them. These shots were actually useful for Ark. The rock snakes reacted to the vibration. A large number of rock snakes came pouring out as the projectiles recklessly hit the environment. It was to the extent that the rock snakes seemed to cover the entire wall. They were so easy to deal with that he didn't need to worry about them. The Kero's hit rate was also so bad that it couldn't distinguish between friend and foe.

“Ouch! Where are those stupid frogs shooting?”

A Katz coughed and cursed as they were hit by a grenade. Thanks to that, Ark's group could climb up without the Katz catching up to them. The problem occurred when they reached the middle part.

“RPG!”

Camel suddenly screamed. Ark and Irina flinched and turned to see a shell heading towards them. A Kero had launched a RPG! Some shells were heading in an unexpected direction. But it wasn't just one frog firing the RPG.

Pusung! Pusung! Pusung!

Quantity rather than quality. 10 shells flew continuously.

“Everybody down!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa, kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Successive explosions occurred around the group lying face down. The ground shook roughly and dirt and rocks poured down on top of them. Part of the ground in the middle area was swept away like a landslide and one member slid away with it. No, they were about to fall! Irina threw her body and grabbed his wrist.

“Ugh! Ensign-nim!”

“Hold on tightly! You can’t let go!”

“I can’t! My injuries are too severe and I’m lacking strength in my hand! Let go and escape with the other members!”

“Don’t talk so weakly! I’ve already lost a lot of my group! I’m not losing anymore!”

“B-but.....”

“Didn’t I tell you to shut up? If you can talk then climb up!”

“T-that’s not.....above! F-falling rocks!”

Irina looked up and her face paled.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku!

A large amount of dirt and sand were flowing down the slope above them. But the dirt and sand was a problem for later. A rock was rolling ahead of the dirt! It was a huge rock. If hit then it would be instant death! She would turn into a stone frog. Then one man stood in front of her.

“Armour armament!”

The man shouting was Ark! A battle suit enveloped him and Ark’s fist stretched out towards the falling rock.

“Take this! 18 Barrage!”

It was his special technique 18 Barrage that consumed 100% of the mana! Steam bubbled from his battle suit and there was an explosion of fists.

‘One point! Focus all my attacks on one area!’

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

His fists flew at 300 km/hr and only concentrated on hitting one point. 18 Barrage was completed in just 1 second. The rock split in half as the final fist of 18 Barrage was driven in. The battle suit split open and removed itself from Ark.

“Ah, Ark-nim!”

Irina gave Ark a disbelieving look. However Ark was still looking at the top.

‘I did it! But.....’

Hundreds of tons of sediment were pouring down. There was no way to stop the sediment with a sword or fist. Then the only way was to endure it.

‘Pay attention! It’s not over yet!’

“Mind Shield!”

-The Mind Shield has been activated.

<A shield with 410 durability has been generated around the body. The shield will reduce all damage by 40~60% until the durability falls to 0.

In addition, the effect of Backstab or Sudden Blow will be nullified by 100%>

The shield wrapped around his body and Ark stepped in front of the group. He crossed his arms to form the letter X.

“Come!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

At the same time, hundreds of tons of sediment covered Ark. The rocks among the dirt hit Ark as the landslide swept past him. The shield’s durability was sucked out at a tremendous rate. However Ark continued standing there with his arms crossed in front of him. It was the end if he was buried in dirt and sand. If Ark crumbled then

Irina and the group would be wiped out!

“Never.....give up.....I won’t!”

Ark croaked with bloody lips. He focused all his efforts and maintained his posture against the sediment falling down. The pressure only loosened after he was pushed back into the basin. His trembling knees finally collapsed.

“Heok!”

Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok!

There was the continuous sound of iron around him. It was the sound of being surrounded by Kero and having guns pointed at him.

‘Damn!’

Ark cursed as he quickly got up. The Heir’s Sword wasn’t in his hand anymore. Ark hurriedly looked around and saw the sword hilt buried in the dirt approximately 10 metres away. He had dropped the sword while being pushed by the landslide. And now he was surrounded by frogs holding guns!

‘In the end.....’

Ark sighed and looked around. He had survived despite the huge amounts of dirt and sand. Unfortunately 3 members of the crew were already injured so they were now in a critical condition.

It would end here. 200 Kero were pointing their guns at the group! Ark couldn’t see a way to get out of this. No matter how lousy their hit rate was, if they fired in unison then Ark would be riddled with bullets in seconds. No, it was more like he would become a crushed tomato.

–Kekekeke, try not to blow up the room.

A Kero smiled and lifted a RPG. And the moment he was about to pull the trigger!

“Stupid bastard!”

Snap! Chwajijijijik!

The Kero was hit by lightning. The one holding the RPG instantly turned to ashes. The Kero were perplexed by the sudden situation and looked at the robed man who appeared. Sparks were flying from the hands of the robed man!

“Idiots! Do you intend to ruin the plan I put so much effort into preparing? You can’t use firearms in a place like this! A sword. There is no need to capture them. Just kill with your swords!”

“Leave it to us.”

A group of people stepped forward. They were the Katz who had descended the slope.

“Okay. Take care of these guys.”

“Huhuhu, you cheeky humans. Shall we start attacking?”

The Katz approached with their sharp claws. But Ark had no interest in them. Ark’s head was repeatedly replaying the footage with the Kero and the RPG.

‘He prevented the Kero from firing their guns. If he intended to kill us then that would be much easier. Despite that, he stopped the guns from killing us. He said it would ruin his plans.....which reminds me, I don’t know what his plan is. Why did they not leave after their lair was discovered? If the use of firearms would risk ruining the plan.....’

Ark looked behind him. A large antenna was located in the centre of the basin.

‘That is the reason why the robed man prevented the use of firearms!’

200 Kero were gathered in front of Ark’s group. If all of them fired then the antenna would definitely be hit. The Kero’s hit rate was low. Of course the antenna would be destroyed. Just as he was thinking that.

“Where are you looking? Your opponent is me!”

A Katz rushed forward and swung his claws. Ark looked back at Irina and shouted.

“Get down! Shield Emission!”

Ark’s shield exploded and hundreds of fragments flew around. It was the Mind Shield that had 410 durability! The shield hadn’t been completely destroyed by the landslide. And Mind Shield was still a shield. Ark blew up the Mind Shield with Shield Emission. The shield wrapped around his whole body so the blast range was 360 degrees!

Jajajajang! Pepepepeng!

The fragments of the broken shield flew around. The Katz rushing at him only received minor wounds. The durability of the shield was low so it was natural for the damage to fall. But it was enough to push them away for a while.

“This bastard.....!”

The moment the Katz were going to flock again!

“Psychokinesis! Come my sword!”

Ark reached out and the beam sword flew into his hands like a magnet was attached to it. It was the Psychokinesis skill he received from Xanax!

Wiing! Wiing! Wiing!

Ark pushed them back with a swing of his lightsaber. He ran to the antenna dish and took out a grenade.

“Don’t move! If anyone moves even one step then I will throw this grenade at the antenna!”

“Stop!”

Sure enough.

The robed man shouted with a pale face.

He glared at Ark and angrily proclaimed.

“Do you think you can get out of here alive if you do this?”

“If I don’t do this? Wouldn’t I still die?”

“.....!”

“This is my plan of desperation. If I’m going to die then shouldn’t I blow something up with me? Eh? How about it? Should I do it quickly?”

Ark prepared to pull out the safety pin. The robed man desperately said.

“W-wait! What do you want?”

“The key.”

Ark lifted his finger and replied.

“Don’t you have the key to the transport ship that the escaped prisoners came on? Give it to me.”

“.....Give it.”

The robed man said as he looked at the Katz.

“Marshal! Why do I have to give the key.....?”

“You stupid cats! Shut up and give it to him!”

The man they called Marshal snapped at the Katz. The Katz immediately took out the key as they were threatened with lightning. Ark took the key and looked at Irina.

“Irina-nim and the other members should escape to the transport ship first.”

“If we escape first then what about Ark-nim?”

“These guys have RPGs. If I take the transport ship as well then those guys will shoot us down before we can escape. This is the only way I can stop that situation. Don’t worry. Do you think I want to die? I’ll get out of it alive somehow so go ahead.”

There was no guarantee he would survive. But this was the best way

at the moment. If Irina's group escaped then he would complete the quest. He could also look good in front of a girl he was interested in. No, in this case wasn't it a bonus that he would complete the quest? Anyway! There would be benefits even if he died. Irina also knew this much.

"Yes, I will look for you on Istana."

No, she was already treating him like someone dead.....

Ark cooled down at Irina's words.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku!

Suddenly the entire mine started to vibrate. The Marshal murmured in a voice full of ecstasy.

"Oh! The time has finally come! The time to resurrect the Great God!"

"God? What nonsense is this.....?"

Ark raised his head as a wind rushed through the mine. Red rays shot out from 4 planets that could be seen above the mine? The 4 rays then connected with each other above his head!

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

A pillar of red light rose from the antenna that Ark was holding hostage. It overlapped with the 4 rays of light.

The northernmost corner of the galaxy changed. There were 5 planets that made up the constellation Harmadon. Right now a massive event was taking place there. The five red lights formed a huge pattern in space. That pattern was a pentagram! The pentagram was several million kilometres large. After a while.....

The space in the centre of the pentagram distorted and enormous flames spurted. A huge fireball had started to appear from the space. However this fireball wasn't made of light.

Darkness!

It was a deeper darkness than outer space! The darkness swallowed up any light that hit it.

Ohhhh! Ohhhh! Ohhhh!

The black existence stretched out in all directions. At the same time, all users logged into Galaxian received the same message.

— [Episode II: Dark Omen] has begun.

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